

Amanda Knox hires DC lawyer as literary agent

SEATTLE (AP) — Amanda Knox says she's hired a Washington, D.C., lawyer to help her land a book deal after an Italian court cleared her and her ex-boyfriend in the killing of her British roommate.



Amanda Knox during her murder trial in Italy. Knox says she's hired a Washington, D.C., lawyer to help her land a book deal after an Italian court cleared her and her ex-boyfriend in the killing of her British roommate.

Knox family spokesman Dave Marriott says Robert Barnett will represent Knox in discussions with publishers and help her evaluate other opportunities. Barnett has represented the literary interests of U.S. Presidents Barack Obama, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, as well as former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin. Knox returned to her hometown of Seattle in October after she was cleared in Meredith Kercher's death. The 24-year-old had been in custody since 2007, and experts have suggested she could score a seven-figure book deal. She hasn't granted any interviews since her release. □

Trumped Up



Gingrich meets with Trump, begins ads in Iowa

Republican presidential candidate, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Donald Trump shake hands after they met and spoke to the media in New York, Monday, Dec. 5, 2011.

(AP Photo/Seth Wenig)

NEW YORK (AP) — Republican presidential candidate Newt Gingrich, surging in the latest opinion polls, declared plans to challenge Barack Obama in every state in next year's election, and began running his first television ad to push toward his party's nomination. However, Gingrich on Monday also found himself defending the state of his campaign and his own comments about poor children. "I do not suggest children until about 14 or 15 years of age do heavy, dangerous janitorial work," Gingrich told reporters. "On the other hand, there are a number of things done to clean buildings that are not heavy or dangerous." The U.S. economy remains the top issue in next year's election, and Obama is

vulnerable on the issue because unemployment, while down slightly, remains at a damaging 8.6 percent. Also, millions of Americans have lost their homes to mortgage foreclosures in the aftermath of the Great Recession that began in the waning months of George W. Bush's presidency. Polling shows Obama's favorable rating at an all-time low, yet in head-to-head matchups with the leading Republican contenders the incumbent is either leading or in a statistical tie. Gingrich chose heavily Democratic New York City to announce plans to campaign all across the country — not just in traditionally Republican or swing states — next fall against Obama. He packed the rest of the day with fundraisers and meetings, including one

with Donald Trump, who flirted with a presidential bid himself and has sought to play a role in the Republican selection process. Gingrich has drawn fire over the past week for suggesting that poor children as young as 9 years old should work at least part time cleaning their schools in order to learn about work. As Gingrich volunteers scrambled in some states to meet deadlines to get his name on ballots, the candidate dismissed the notion that his team wasn't up to the task of waging a credible challenge against the better-funded, better-organized Mitt Romney. With only one month until the first presidential votes are cast, the Republican race has seemed to narrow to a contest between Gingrich and Romney. Each

spent the day wooing donors, Gingrich on the East Coast and Romney on the West Coast, as the hunt for cash intensified ahead of the string of costly contests that begin Jan. 3 in Iowa. The two will cross paths Wednesday as the candidates all convene in Washington to court Jewish voters and again Saturday at a debate in Iowa, the first of three planned for December. This one is shaping up as a pivotal debate, given that Gingrich's recent comeback has been fueled largely by a string of strong performances in which he demonstrated policy expertise and was able to appear statesman-like while steering clear of criticizing his Republican rivals.

Continued on Page 2

Gingrich meets with Trump, begins ads in Iowa

Continued from Front

He is the latest Republican candidate to enjoy a burst of momentum and he's working to prove that, unlike the others who have risen and fallen, he's a serious contender with staying power.

To that end, Monday was supposed to be a day for the former U.S. House speaker to capitalize on businessman Herman Cain's departure from the race and his own soaring poll numbers, making a good showing for up-for-grabs tea party supporters. Gingrich's expected show of force didn't go exactly as planned, and the day ended up underscoring the challenges he now faces since going from the back of the pack to the front.

Twice on Monday he tried to explain what he had meant about poor kids working. He said his original



Republican presidential candidate, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, right, waves after meeting with Donald Trump, and talking to the media in New York, Monday, Dec. 5, 2011.

(AP Photo/Seth Wenig)

point had been "distorted" to make him look insensitive. The idea, Gingrich said, would be "to get them

into the world of work, get them into the opportunity to earn money, to get them into the habit of showing

up and realizing that effort is rewarded and America is all about the work ethic." He said he had persuaded

Trump to mentor a group of children from New York City's poorest schools.

"I thought it was a great idea," said Trump, who hosts the reality show "Celebrity Apprentice." "We're going to be picking 10 young wonderful children and make them 'apprenti.' We're going to have a little fun with it." While praising Gingrich, Trump said he would wait to endorse a candidate until after he hosts a debate in late December. In Iowa, Gingrich's campaign rolled out a 60-second ad that projected sunny optimism. "Some people say the America we know and love is a thing of the past. I don't believe that, because working together I know we can rebuild America," he says in the ad laden with Americana, down to a white picket fence, the Statue of Liberty and the American Stars and Stripes. □

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Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, speaks about his upcoming federal corruption re-trial at his home in Chicago.
 (AP Photo/M. Spencer Green, File)

Ousted governor hoping for light court sentence

MICHAEL TARM
Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A veteran judge will sentence Rod Blagojevich this week on corruption charges in a potentially surprise-filled spectacle where the former Illinois governor may beg for mercy or dig in his heels to protest his innocence. The impeached state executive-turned-reality TV star has reason to feel anxious stepping before U.S. District Judge James Zagel. He's staring at the possibility of 10 or more years in prison. Zagel is known for being tough but fair. The 70-year-old judge must answer several nuanced questions in calculating a sentence. Those include what harm Blagojevich's crimes caused and whether any good he did as governor counterbalances the bad. The sentencing hearing starts Tuesday. But Zagel will announce the sentence Wednesday, possibly to give him time to sleep on it. □

Obama fights for Jewish support amid GOP attacks

ERICA WERNER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama and his Republican opponents are clashing over U.S. policy toward Israel as each side jockey for support from Jewish voters, who could be critical in the 2012 election. Aiming to cast Obama as unfairly harsh toward Israel and soft on the Palestinians, Republican presidential hopefuls Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich have urged the president to fire his ambassador to Belgium. The envoy, Howard Gutman, had said that some anti-Semitism stemmed from tensions between Israel and the Palestinians; Romney and Gingrich say his remarks unfairly blamed Israel.

The White House says Obama has a strong record on support for Israel, and quickly fired back with a statement condemning "anti-Semitism in all its forms." The State Department said Gutman would remain in his job. Republicans also challenged Obama's assertion at a fundraiser last week that "this administration has done more in terms of the security of the state of Israel than any previous administration." Romney said Obama has "repeatedly thrown Israel under the bus" — an accusation the Republican National Committee repeated on Monday. Firing back, Democratic National Committee Chair-

woman Debbie Wasserman Schultz called Romney's comments "outrageous" and questioned his own policies. The White House cited military aid to Israel and support at the United Nations, and pointed to statements from Israeli officials backing up Obama's assertion. The fiery debate probably will continue Wednesday when

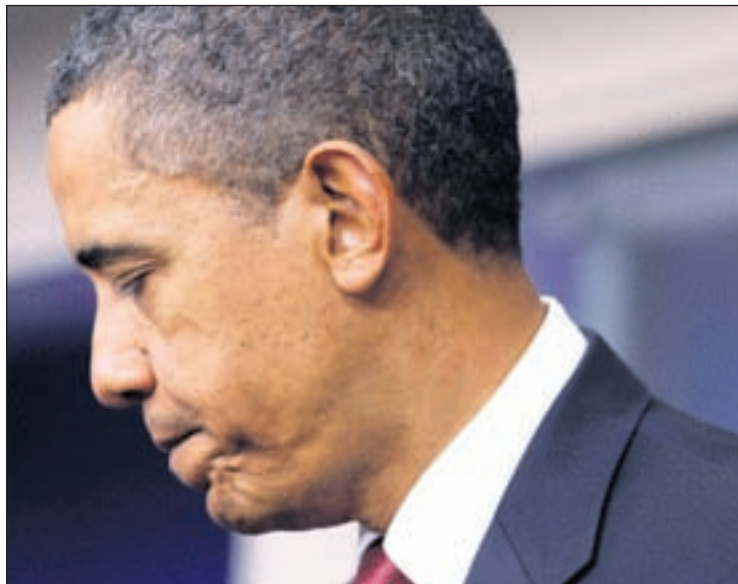
kah party, followed by an Obama speech next week to an expected audience of nearly 6,000 at a conference of the Union for Reform Judaism. Such attention is all being paid in recognition that Jewish voters, although comprising only 2 percent of the electorate nationwide, are an important part of Obama's base and could make the differ-

to chip away at it. "This campaign takes the Jewish vote very, very seriously," said Ira Forman, the Obama campaign Jewish outreach director. "I'm confident this will be the most comprehensive effort in presidential campaign history."

The White House outreach has increased since May when Obama caused a furor by suggesting Israel's 1967 borders, with agreed-upon land swaps, as a basis for resuming negotiations toward a two-state solution with the Palestinians. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected the '67 borders as indefensible and largely disregarded Obama's emphasis on land swaps to account for current conditions.

Republicans seized on the dispute. And while Obama supporters say his argument was widely mischaracterized, damage was done. Now the Obama campaign and its backers say they are determined to respond rapidly to such criticism in the future.

"We are trying to responsibly respond to all of these unsubstantiated or false allegations, but there are so many of them, and they are so frequently recited despite the fact that the people who are spreading them have to know that they're false, that it's hard to keep up with them," said Alan Solow, an Obama fundraiser and longtime associate. □



President Barack Obama leaves the podium after making a statement to reporters in the James Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House in Washington, Monday, Dec. 5, 2011, urging Republican lawmakers to pass the payroll tax cut. President Obama and his Republican opponents are clashing over U.S. policy toward Israel as each side jockey for support from Jewish voters, who could be critical in the 2012 election.
 (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

the Republican presidential candidates attend a Washington forum hosted by the Republican Jewish Coalition. Obama campaign officials say they will be ready to respond. And the next day, Jewish leaders will be at the White House for briefings on Israel and a Hanuk-

ence in battleground states including Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Nevada in a close election. Moreover, the Jewish community is an important source of donations, and Obama campaign supporters want to maintain that support as much as Republicans want

Elderly complain about pants search at NY airport

CHRIS HAWLEY

KELLI KENNEDY

Associated Press Writers

NEW YORK (AP) —

With age come such things as catheters, colostomy bags and adult diapers. Now add another indignity to getting old — having to drop your pants and show these things to a complete stranger.

Two women in their 80s put the Transportation Security Administration on the defensive this week by going public about their embarrassment during screenings in a private room at Kennedy Airport.

One claimed she was forced to lower her pants and underwear in front of an agent so that her back brace could be inspected. Another said agents made her pull down her waistband to show her colostomy bag.

While not confirming some of the details, the TSA said a preliminary review shows officers followed the agen-



Two women in their 80s put the Transportation Security Administration on the defensive this week by going public about their embarrassment during screenings in a private room at Kennedy Airport.

cy's procedures in both cases. But experts said the potential for such searches will increase as the U.S. population ages and receives prosthetics and other medical devices, some of which cannot go through screening machines.

"You have pacemakers, you have artificial hips, you have artificial knees," said U.S. Rep. Peter King, chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee. "As we get older and we

keep ourselves together, it's going to take more and more surgery.

There's going to be more and more medical improvements, but that can create what appears to be a security issue."

Prosthetic devices can set off metal detectors, and certain devices such as catheters and bags are visible on body scanners, making those passengers candidates for more thorough inspections. Metal

detectors and wands can disrupt some devices such as implanted defibrillators, so those passengers must ask for pat-downs instead. Ruth Sherman, 88, of Florida, said she was mortified when inspectors pulled her aside and asked about the bulge in her pants as she arrived for a flight to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Nov. 28.

"I said, 'I have a bag here,'" she said on Monday, pointing to the bulge, which is bigger or smaller depending on what she eats. "They didn't understand."

She said they escorted her to another room where two female agents "made me lower my sweatpants, and I was really very humiliated." She said she stood with her arms and legs outstretched, warning the agents not to touch her colostomy bag. Touching the bag can cause pain, she said.

"It's degrading. It's like someone raped you," Sherman said. "They didn't

know how to handle a human being."

The next day, agents took 85-year-old Lenore Zimmerman, of Long Beach, New York, into a private room to remove her back brace for screening after she decided against going through a scanning machine because of her heart defibrillator. Zimmerman said she had to raise her blouse and lower her pants and underwear for a female TSA agent.

Bruce Zimmerman, her son, said the agents "should've patted her down."

"To have her pants and underpants pulled down is just beyond humiliating," he said Monday. "This is my mother we are talking about."

The TSA said Monday that it is still investigating the cases.

"Our officers are committed to treating every passenger with dignity and respect," the agency said in a statement. □

US experts:

Iran capture of stealth drone no worry

LOLITA C. BALDOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

U.S. military officials said Monday they are concerned that Tehran may have an opportunity to acquire information about the classified surveillance drone program after one of the stealthy aircraft crashed in Iran while patrolling in western Afghanistan.

But experts suggested that even if the Iranians have found parts of the unmanned spy plane, they can probably glean little from it. Because it likely fell from a high altitude, there may be very few large pieces to examine.

The RQ-170 — known as the Sentinel — has been used in Afghanistan, particularly along the border, for several years. The U.S. Air Force has just "a handful" of them, said defense analyst Loren Thompson, with the Virginia-based



A Heron drone at the Israeli army air base in Palmahim, Israel, Monday, Dec. 5, 2011. U.S. military officials said Monday they are concerned that Tehran may have an opportunity to acquire information about the classified surveillance drone program after one of the stealthy aircraft crashed in Iran while patrolling in western Afghanistan.

(AP Photo/Dan Balilty)

Lexington Institute.

"I think we're always concerned when there's an aircraft, whether it's manned or unmanned, that we lose, particularly in a place where we're not able to get to it," Navy Capt. John Kirby, a Pentagon spokesman, told reporters Mon-

day.

U.S. officials have acknowledged that the military lost control of one of the stealthy drones while it was flying a mission over western Afghanistan. Iran's official IRNA news agency has said that Iran's armed forces shot it down.

U.S. officials have rejected that claim, saying there are no indications the Sentinel was shot down. In either case, officials said this would be the first Sentinel lost by the U.S.

Analysts, however, played down any serious impact of the drone — or pieces of it — falling into Iranian hands. "This is an aircraft that evades radar because of its shape and because of the special material used," said Thompson.

"It won't enable the Iranians to build a stealthy unmanned aircraft."

Analysts said that stealth technologies — primarily the low-observable shape and the materials used — are fairly well known, but often hard to replicate. The Sentinel, made by Lockheed Martin, has a swept-wing shape, much like the B-2 stealth bomber.

And it has been called the "Beast of Kandahar" be-

cause of its use in Afghanistan.

"They were designed to be silver bullets that could go places that other manned or unmanned aircraft would not be able to go. It specifically is designed to be very difficult for enemies to track and target," said Thompson. "This is a high-flying unmanned aircraft that malfunctioned and then fell to earth. It's likely to be broken up into hundreds of pieces."

John Pike of the Globalsecurity.org think tank said the Iranians already have all the data on the drone's external shape, "and there is nothing particularly unique about this configuration."

He said the key to America's success with the stealthy aircraft is the fuel efficient engines, which give it the ability to stay aloft for days rather than hours. □

Postal service cuts will slow first-class mail

STEVEN GREENHOUSE
© 2011 New York Times

The U.S. Postal Service said on Monday that it would reduce service to cut costs in a move it said could largely eliminate the chance of next-day delivery for stamped letters.

Delivery delays will result from the postal service's decision to shut about half of its 487 mail processing centers across the nation.

This would cause the postal service to reduce delivery standards for first-class mail for the first time in 40 years, substantially increasing the distance that mail travels between post offices and processing centers.

Current standards call for delivering first-class mail in one to three days within the continental United States. Under the planned cutbacks, those delivery times would increase to two or three days, potentially creating problems for companies like Netflix that rely heavily on next-day delivery. The agency announced in September that it would begin studying plans to close 252 out of 487 mail processing centers, and on Monday it said it would "move forward" with that plan, with closings to begin as early as March. Heavy pressure from Congress or the public could still cause the postal service to scale back the plan, at least somewhat.

Patrick Donahoe, the postmaster general, has repeatedly said that by 2015 he hopes to cut \$20 billion from the agency's annual costs, which are now about \$75 billion. He has called for closing up to 3,700 of the nation's 32,000 post offices, while reducing deliveries to five days a week from six, and cutting the agency's work force of 653,000 employees by more than 100,000.

"We're in a deep financial crisis today because we have a business model that's tied to the past," he said at a news conference last month. "We are expected to operate like a business, but don't have the flexibility to do so. Our business model is funda-



U. S. Postal Service letter carrier Terry Caldwell, of Topsham, Maine, reaches for mail while on his delivery route in Bath, Maine on, Monday, Dec. 5, 2011. The Postal Service, which has been losing money for five years, announced Monday that it would close 252 out of 461 mail processing centers across the country starting next April.

(AP Photo/Pat Wellenbach)

mentally inflexible. It prevents the postal service from solving its problems." Donahoe has urged Congress to act with more urgency to allow the postal service to cut costs. In recent months, he has complained repeatedly that his agency needs permission from Congress to take the actions he says it needs in an era when mail volume has plunged largely because of the explosion of email and electronic bill-paying. Mail volume has dropped more than 20 percent – by more than 40 billion pieces – over the last five years. According to The

Associated Press, about 42 percent of first-class mail is currently delivered the following day, while 27 percent is delivered in two days. Thirty-one percent arrives in three days and less than 1 percent is delivered in four to five days. According to postal officials, after processing centers are closed in the spring, slightly more than half of all first-class mail is expected to be delivered in two days, with most of the rest arriving in three days. The postal service previously announced a 1-cent increase in first-class postage, to 45 cents, starting Jan. 22. □



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US man pleads to firearm charge in militia case



Joshua Clough of Blissfield, Mich. Clough, accused of conspiring to rebel against the government and use weapons of mass destruction, has pleaded guilty to a firearm charge, the first plea in the case, the government said Monday, Dec. 5, 2011.
 (AP Photo/U.S. Marshall, File)

DETROIT (AP) — A member of a Midwest militia accused of conspiring to rebel against the government and use weapons of mass destruction has pleaded guilty to a firearm charge, the first plea in the case, the government said Monday.

Joshua Clough, 29, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Detroit.

During a series of raids in March 2010, authorities arrested Clough and eight other alleged members of a southern Michigan group called Hutaree. Federal prosecutors claim

Hutaree members were scheming to kill a police officer, then attack law enforcement who attended the funeral, in the first steps toward a broader rebellion.

The remaining eight defendants are scheduled to stand trial beginning Feb. 7 before U.S. District Judge Victoria Roberts.

As part of his plea, Clough acknowledged he was a member of Hutaree and in February of last year participated in a training session that "focused on an upcoming covert reconnaissance exercise,"

U.S. Attorney Barbara McQuade said in a statement. She said Clough "used and carried a firearm" during the training session.

Plea negotiations began in the spring, defense attorney Randall C. Roberts said.

"My client made a decision based upon his situation and we decided to forge ahead with this plea," Roberts said.

Clough was expected to be sentenced in April, his lawyer said.

He faces a mandatory five years in federal prison. □

Ex-Miss Russia back in NYC jail

NEW YORK (AP) — A former Miss Russia has been thrown back in a New York City jail after getting tossed from court-ordered rehabilitation in a drug case.

Anna Malova is being held



Former Miss Russia Anna Malova has been thrown back in a New York City jail after getting tossed from court-ordered rehabilitation in a drug case.

without bail at least until her court date next week.

Authorities said Monday that she had been causing trouble in rehab. Malova has been charged with repeatedly forging prescriptions to get painkillers. She'd been on track to get the charges dismissed if

she successfully completed drug treatment. But she could be tried if a judge ultimately determines she has failed at rehab. Malova was a doctor in her homeland. She was named Miss Russia and finished in the top 10 in the Miss Universe pageant in 1998. □

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Pearl Harbor survivors share stories of attack

AUDREY McAVOY

Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP)—Clarence Pfundheller was standing in front of his locker on the USS Maryland when a fellow sailor told him they were being bombed by Japanese planes.

"We never did call him a liar but he could stretch the truth pretty good," Pfundheller said. "But once you seen him, you knew he wasn't lying."

The 21-year-old Iowa native ran up to the deck that Sunday morning to man a five-inch anti-aircraft gun. Seventy years later, he remembers struggling to shoot low-flying Japanese planes as smoke from burning oil billowed through the air.

"This was the worst thing about it — yeah, your eyes — it bothered you. It bothered your throat too, because there was so much of that black smoke rolling around that a lot of times you could hardly see," he said.

Now 91, Pfundheller will be returning to Pearl Harbor on Wednesday for the 70th anniversary ceremony honoring those lost in the Dec. 7, 1941 attack that brought the United States into World War II.

Accompanying him will be fellow survivors, other World War II veterans, and a handful of college students eager to hear their stories.

The student and veteran group will be among 3,000 people attending a ceremony the Navy and the National Park Service hoist jointly each year at a site overlooking where the USS Arizona sank in the attack. The College of the Ozarks program aims to preserve the stories of veterans — something that's becoming increasingly urgent for Pearl Harbor survivors as the youngest are in their late 80s.

Pfundheller said he enlisted in the Navy in 1939 because he kept hearing there was going to be a war and he wanted to know what to do when the fighting started. By the time Japanese fighter planes and torpedo bombers invaded the skies above Hawaii, he was well-trained. Even so, the scene was utterly chaotic.

Commanders hadn't expected Japan to strike from the air, so Pfundheller's anti-aircraft ammunition was locked away in a gun locker. Then, when he gained access to the 3-foot-long, 75-pound shells, Pfundheller said the Japanese planes were flying too close for him to take aim.

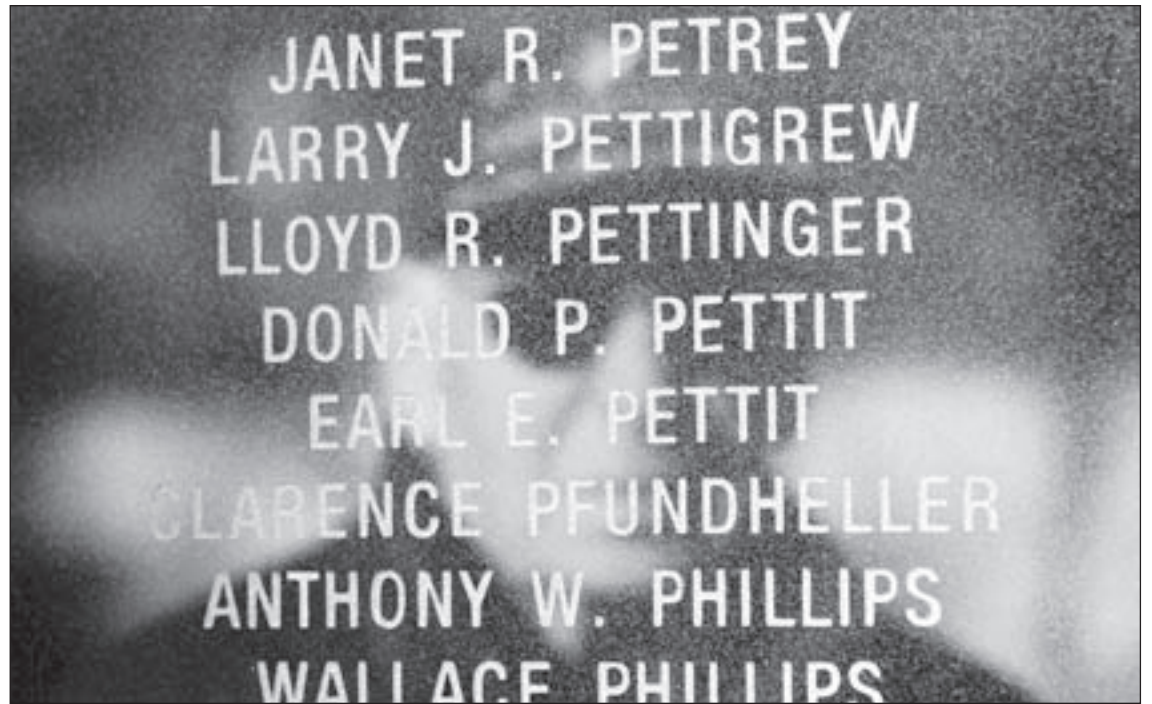
"You could see them pumping their fists and laughing at you," he said. The Maryland's crew scrambled to prevent

their battleship from going down with the USS Oklahoma, which rolled over after being hit by multiple torpe-

returned to Iowa where he worked as a district feed salesman and became an elementary school

nobody asked anything," he said.

Today, efforts are under way to make sure stories



World War II Navy veteran Clarence Pfundheller is reflected in the Adair County Veterans Memorial, featuring his name, in Greenfield, Iowa. Now 91, Pfundheller will be returning to Pearl Harbor on Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2011, for the 70th anniversary ceremony honoring those lost in the Dec. 7, 1941 attack that brought the United States into World War II. Accompanying him will be fellow survivors, other World War II veterans, and a handful of college students to hear their stories.

(AP Photo/Charlie Neibergall)

does.

"We had to cut her lines tied up to us because it was pulling us away," he said. Altogether, 2,390 Americans lost their lives in the attack. Twelve ships sank or were beached, and nine were damaged. The U.S. lost 164 aircraft. On the Japanese side, 64 people died, five ships sank, and 29 planes were destroyed. After the war, Pfundfeller

custodian. He now lives in Greenfield just 12 miles from Bridgewater, the town where he was raised.

Many veterans didn't talk much about their experiences after World War II, and Pfundheller's own children didn't hear what he went through until he began sharing his stories at schools and libraries.

"People in the Midwest where I lived — why, you just went back, got your job and went to work and

like his are handed down to younger generations.

Pfundheller and four other World War II veterans are traveling to Hawaii with 10 students from the College of the Ozarks, a Christian school in Branson, Mo. After Hawaii, the group will travel to Japan to visit Okinawa, where the U.S. and Japan fought a brutal battle in the last few months of the war, and Hiroshima, where the U.S. dropped the first atomic bomb. □

US man who killed 25 farmworkers denied parole

DON THOMPSON

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, California (AP) — A man who was once known as the nation's worst serial killer was again denied parole Monday after he admitted his guilt for the first time before the parole board.

Juan Corona said he murdered and mutilated 25 farmworkers four decades ago because they were trespassing in the orchards north of Sacramento, said county Assistant District Attorney Jana McClung.

Parole officials decided Co-

rona can try again in five years, McClung said after the two-hour hearing. It was Corona's seventh bid for parole from Corcoran State Prison.

Corona previously made incriminating statements to a prison psychologist but had never before acknowledged his guilt during a parole hearing.

"This is the first time that I'm aware of that he made that admission to the full board. He said it was trespassing and they were winos," McClung said.

Corona, 77, has been di-

agnosed with dementia and mental illness.

No family members of his victims attended the hearing. Prosecutors said Corona targeted victims who had few relatives and likely wouldn't be missed.

"We have had no contact with survivors for two decades now," District Attorney Carl Adams said before the hearing. "The people who he killed were farm laborers who were itinerant. Most of them didn't have relatives who could be contacted back in the '70s at the time of trial." □



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Afghanistan to need financial support until 2024

ANNE GEARAN
JUERGEN BAETZ
Associated Press

BONN, Germany (AP) — Afghanistan will need the financial support of other countries for at least another decade beyond the 2014 departure of foreign troops, Afghan President Hamid Karzai said Monday at an international confer-

constructive role."

Pakistan is seen as instrumental to ending the insurgency in Afghanistan because of its links to militant groups and its unwillingness, from the U.S. and NATO perspective, to drive insurgents from safe havens on its soil where they regroup and rearm.

During the one-day con-

Japan.

"We will need your steadfast support for at least another decade," Karzai told the delegates, echoing a recent assessment by the World Bank that predicted a sharp budget shortfall as the 130,000 international troops gradually withdraw. The United States announced it would free more



U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, centre, meets with an Afghan women's civil society delegation during an international conference on the future of Afghanistan, Monday, Dec. 5, 2011, in Bonn, Germany. Representatives of more than 90 countries and organizations are gathering to discuss the future of Afghanistan after the eventual withdrawal of foreign military forces.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite, Pool)

ence. But the conference on the future of Afghanistan in Bonn was overshadowed by a public display of bad blood between the United States and Pakistan, the two nations with the greatest stake and say in making Afghanistan safe and solvent.

Pakistan boycotted the meeting to protest an apparently errant U.S. air strike last month that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers along the rough border with Afghanistan. The strike furthered the perception in Pakistan that NATO and the U.S. are its true enemies, not the Taliban militants that operate on both sides of the border. "It was unfortunate that they did not participate," U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said. "I expect that Pakistan will be involved going forward and we expect them to play a

ference, about 100 nations and international organizations, including the United Nations, jointly pledged political and financial long-term support for war-torn Afghanistan to prevent it from falling back into chaos or becoming a safe haven for terrorists. "Together we have spent blood and treasure in fighting terrorism," Karzai said. "Your continued solidarity, your commitment and support will be crucial so that we can consolidate our gains and continue to address the challenges that remain."

Donor nations did not commit to specific figures but pledged that economic and other advances in Afghanistan since the ouster of the Taliban government in 2001 should be safeguarded with continued funding. A donor conference will be held in July in

than \$650 million in support for small community-based development projects in Afghanistan, frozen because of financial irregularities in Afghanistan's key Kabul Bank.

Afghanistan estimates it will need outside contributions of roughly \$10 billion in 2015 and onward, slightly less than half the country's annual gross national product, mostly because it won't be able to pay for its security forces which are slated to increase to 352,000 personnel by the end of 2014.

Organizer Germany and the United States had once hoped this week's conference would showcase progress toward a political settlement between Afghanistan and the Taliban-led insurgency that 10 years of fighting by international forces has failed to dislodge. □

Iran: penalties could mean soaring oil prices

RICK GLADSTONE

© 2011 New York Times

Alarmed by the possibility of new Western penalties that could abruptly reduce or even halt its oil exports, Iran issued a warning Monday that crude oil prices could more than double to \$250 a barrel if such sanctions were given serious consideration.

The warning, issued by the Foreign Ministry, appeared to be part of an attempt by Iran to intimidate its adversaries as tensions grow. Western nations stepped up their efforts to isolate Iran diplomatically after mobs stormed and vandalized Britain's diplomatic facilities in Tehran less than a week ago, evoking stark images of the U.S. Embassy takeover after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The assault was widely criticized, even by some of Iran's friends.

Despite the warning from Iran, oil prices were little changed by the end of the day.

Leaders in Iran are increasingly concerned that oil sales, Iran's main source of

cessfully, to halt its suspect nuclear program.

Iran is the third-largest exporter of oil, after Saudi Arabia and Russia. Its biggest customers — China, the European Union, Japan, India and South Korea — together account for two-thirds of Iran's total oil exports, according to an analysis published by the Energy Information Administration in the United States. Reduced orders from just one of those customers could be disruptive for Iran, where the economy is already suffering from the accumulated effects of other sanctions.

After the assault on the British Embassy, European Union ministers said they would give serious consideration to an oil embargo at a meeting in January, and the U.S. Senate voted 100-0 for legislation that would penalize any foreign bank that does business with Iran's central bank.

The Senate measure, meant to use access to the U.S. market as leverage in isolating Iran, is not yet law, and could be modified. But



Black-dressed Iranian Shiite Muslims beat their shoulders with iron chains in a religious ritual to mourn on the eve of the death anniversary of Imam Hussein, the grandson of Islam's prophet Muhammad, at the northwestern city of Tabriz, Iran, Monday, Dec. 5, 2011. Imam Hussein died in the 680 A.D. battle fought on the plains outside Karbala, a city in modern Iraq, whose death sealed Islam's historical Sunni-Shiite split. Alarmed by the possibility of new Western penalties that could abruptly reduce or even halt its oil exports, Iran issued a warning Monday that crude oil prices could more than double to \$250 a barrel if such sanctions were given serious consideration.

(AP Photo)

income, are now at risk in ways that they were able to avoid in earlier rounds of Western sanctions. Those sanctions were imposed to press Iran, so far unsuc-

analysts said that such a measure, if enforced, could wreak havoc on Iran's oil industry, because the central bank is the main conduit for receipts from oil sales. □



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Back-room negotiations begin on climate intentions

ARTHUR MAX
Associated Press

DURBAN, South Africa (AP)

— Back-room negotiations have begun in earnest on a deal to rescue the only treaty governing greenhouse gas reductions and to launch talks on a broader agreement to include the world's largest polluters: China and other emerging economies, the United States and Europe.

Key players laid out their opening positions Monday in public at U.N. climate talks in South Africa, and were beginning a round of private meetings to probe each other's meanings and intentions — which remained murky.

South African authorities said they were deporting three activists from the Greenpeace environmental group after they were arrested trying to drape a protest banner from the rooftop of a beachfront hotel. The activists from Germany, Denmark and Australia pleaded guilty to trespassing in a court hearing, the Home Affairs Department said.

As the 194-nation conference moved into its decisive week, negotiators were feeling the pressure of a looming deadline: the expiry in 12 months of commitments by industrial countries to reduce climate-changing carbon emissions.

The European Union is championing a deal to get all major countries to agree to binding pollution targets in the future as its condition for renewing its commitments under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. It wants an agreement now to begin negotiations on a new all-encompassing treaty that would conclude by 2015 and take effect five years later.

"We do not need more thinking, we need more

action," said Connie Hedegaard, the European commissioner on climate action.

The linchpins of such a deal are China and the United States — and both set hard conditions.

During the first week of the conference, attention honed in on China, and whether it was signaling new flexibility or reframing known positions.

After a private meeting with the Chinese, the Europeans walked away disappointed, said an EU delegate.

Despite public declarations it would participate in a legally binding agreement in the future, China unequivocally told the EU it would not accept bind-



Activists wear masks depicting the face of the European Commission President, Jose Manuel Barroso, left, and Canada Prime Minister Stephen Harper, right, during a protest in Durban, South Africa, Monday, Dec. 5, 2011. As talks to shore up the international response to global warming entered their second and crucial week in the South African coastal city of Durban environmentalists led a tour of a wetlands area near Durban. Wetlands — critical for the health of South Africa's coasts and river systems — already have been degraded or seriously altered by human activity, and experts fear global warming threatens them further.

(AP Photo/Schalk van Zuydam)

ing targets for itself, said the delegate, speaking on condition of anonymity because negotiations were still in an early phase.

Earlier, China's top climate negotiator Xie Zenhua, in his first meeting with reporters, said China wanted to ensure all previous commitments by the industrial countries were met before entering into the next phase.

But Xie set several "pre-conditions," including an extension of the Kyoto commitments for industrial countries, honoring commitments on immediate and long-term financial aid to poor countries, and delivery on promises of new technologies to develop low-carbon economies. □

Western monitors criticize Russian vote



Members of Nashi, a pro-Kremlin youth movement, gather in Manezh Square, outside the Kremlin, for a rally in Moscow, Dec. 5, 2011. Western election monitors said on Monday that blatant fraud, including the brazen stuffing of ballot boxes, had occurred in the parliamentary elections that delivered surprisingly big losses to United Russia, the party led by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

DAVID M. HERSZENHORN
© 2011 New York Times

MOSCOW — Western election monitors said Monday that they had observed blatant fraud, including the brazen stuffing of ballot boxes, in the parliamentary elections that delivered surprisingly big losses to United Russia, the party led

(James Hill/The New York Times)

by Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin.

The election Sunday left United Russia clinging to a slim majority, and while the monitors declined to draw firm conclusions, it was clear from their report that vote stealing and other alleged malfeasance could have shifted the outcome

in United Russia's favor.

The scathing report by international observers, combined with dramatic, mostly amateur, footage of alleged election malfeasance posted on the Web, made clear that the authorities would face continuing questions about the fairness of the vote despite the main party's steep losses. On Monday evening, thousands of demonstrators gathered on a promenade by the Chistye Prudy metro station in central Moscow and voiced their opposition to the government at an event organized by the Solidarity Party. Throngs chanted "Russia without Putin!" and "Putin is a Thief." Police officials estimated the crowd at about 2,000 though some participants said it was larger. There was a heavy police presence, and some protesters were detained.

Earlier in the day, thousands of supporters of United

Russia held a celebratory event in Revolution Square that took place without incident.

After the redistribution of votes for parties that did not clear a minimum threshold to enter the Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, United Russia will have 238 seats, or just under 53 percent, down from the 315, or 70 percent, it holds now, election officials said.

The observers, from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, said their main concerns were about an overall flawed framework that marred the campaign, including no separation between the government and the main political party; the lack of independence for election administrators and the absence of a free, independent mass media.

Some opposition parties were prohibited from running in the elections at all, the observers said. □

Pakistan PM sees progress in US ties

CHRIS BRUMMITT
Associated Press

LAHORE, Pakistan (AP) — In an overture to Washington, Pakistan's prime minister said Monday his country wants to repair U.S. relations pushed close to rupture since NATO airstrikes on the Afghan border killed 24 Pakistani troops last month. Yousuf Raza Gilani's interview with The Associated Press was the strongest indication yet that Islamabad realizes Pakistan needs an alliance with Washington even as it continues retaliating for the Nov. 26 raid by blocking NATO and U.S. supplies from traveling over its soil into landlocked Afghanistan.

The interview came a day after U.S. President Barack Obama called Pakistan's president to tell him that the airstrikes were not deliberate targeting of Pakistani soldiers and that the U.S. was committed to a full investigation. The White House said Obama and President Asif Ali Zardari reaffirmed their countries'

relationship, which it described as "critical to the security of both nations," and agreed to keep in close touch.

Gilani didn't offer the U.S. anything other than Pakistan's willingness to consider starting over, apparently believing the attack had given Islamabad fresh leverage to dictate terms in what has been an uneasy and largely transactional relationship since Pakistan joined the U.S. war against violent Islamist extremism after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

Gilani said new ties being negotiated with the U.S. would ensure that the two countries "respected each other's red lines" regarding sovereignty and rules of engagement along the border.

"We really want to have good relations with the U.S. based on mutual respect and clearly defined parameters," he said in the interview at his residence in the eastern city of Lahore, at one point having to put up



Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani gestures during an interview with The Associated Press at his residence in Lahore, Pakistan, Monday, Dec. 5, 2011. Gilani says his country wants to rebuild ties with the United States despite Islamabad's ongoing retaliation for deadly airstrikes on its troops by the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan.

(AP Photo/Muhammed Muheisen)

with a mischievous grandchild using a watch to reflect sunlight onto his face. "I think that is doable. I think that it won't take long. We are not anti-American, we are part of the system, we

have to work with the entire international community." Despite Gilani's gentler rhetoric, the gulf between the two nations remains wide. U.S. officials have said the airstrikes have

been the most serious blow to a relationship that has been battered by a series of crises this year, exposing its brittleness each time.

Pakistani officials have been demanding more clarity in their relationship with the United States for some time, angry over the CIA presence in the country and the covert but routine drone strikes that kill militants on its side of the border.

A new agreement, even a vague, nonbinding one, may be enough to satisfy domestic critics that Pakistan has extracted something from Washington before agreeing to reopen the supply lines.

The May 2 U.S. mission that killed Osama bin Laden infuriated the army, which faced humiliation at home for failing to detect the U.S. raid and suspicion abroad after the al-Qaida leader was revealed to have been hiding in an army town for five years.

The Obama administration wants continued engagement even as Pakistan's refusal to attack militant sanctuaries along the border over the last three years has fueled criticism in Congress the country is a duplicitous ally unworthy of American aid.

Many U.S. officials regard Pakistani cooperation as vital for peace talks with Afghan insurgent leaders to succeed because many of the leaders live in Pakistan and have ties to its security forces. The country, home to 180 million people, has nuclear weapons and a thriving Islamist militant insurgency of its own that is giving support to al-Qaida operatives. Containing that threat requires good intelligence cooperation for several years to come. Gilani also said Pakistan remains committed to working with Afghanistan to bring insurgent leaders into talks with the government. That may offer some reassurance to international leaders who discussed Afghanistan's future at a conference Monday in Bonn, Germany. □

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Global Witness quits blood diamonds regulator

DONNA BRYSON
Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — A major human rights watchdog left the international body charged with keeping blood diamonds off the market, accusing the regulatory group of refusing to address links between the gems, violence and tyranny.

Global Witness's departure from the Kimberley Process on Monday raises questions about whether consumers can be sure the diamonds they buy aren't fueling conflict. In a statement, Global Witness cited what it called Kimberley Process failures in Ivory Coast, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

"Consumers have a right to know what they're buying, and what was done to obtain it," said Charmian Gooch, a Global Witness founding director. "The diamond industry must finally

take responsibility for its supply chains and prove that the stones it sells are clean." The diamond industry, rights groups and 75 countries have worked together as members of the Kimberley Process since 2003 to impose requirements on its members to enable them to certify rough diamonds as "conflict-free" so that purchasers can be confident they are not funding violence. The project was born after wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia that were fueled by "blood diamonds."

Partnership-Africa Canada, the other major rights group in the process, said it shared the frustrations of Global Witness, but would remain in the regulatory group in hopes of helping it reform. Alan Martin, Partnership-Africa Canada's research director, said in a year, his group would look again at

whether to remain.

"The Kimberley Process is a necessary but insufficient tool," Martin told The Associated Press, adding his group also would be working in other areas, including supporting legislation in Europe and North American that could make diamond producers more accountable. □

A model displays a diamond jewelry collection for bridal wear in Kolkata, India. Indian imports of gems from Zimbabwe once banned as "blood diamonds" could begin within weeks, officials with India's world-leading jewelry industry said. A major human rights watchdog left the international body charged with keeping blood diamonds off the market, accusing the regulatory group of refusing to address links between the gems, violence and tyranny.

(AP Photo/Bikas Das)



Pakistan actress sues over nude photos

RAVI NESSMAN
Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Pakistani actress Veena Malik is suing a popular Indian men's magazine for millions of dollars, accusing it of publishing photos she says were doctored to make her appear nude, her lawyer said Monday. Malik's racy images in the December issue of FHM India has triggered a fury across her conservative Islamic country, with one cleric calling them a "shame for all Muslims." The photo essay appears to make light of the military rivalry between India and Pakistan, nuclear-armed neighbors who have fought three wars. □



A man holds a copy of the December edition of FHM India, a lifestyle magazine featuring Pakistani actress Veena Malik on the cover, at a magazine store in Bangalore, India, Monday, Dec. 5, 2011. Malik is suing FHM India for millions of dollars, accusing it of publishing photos she says were doctored to make her appear nude, her lawyer said Monday.

(AP Photo/Aijaz Rahi)

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The South reinterprets its 'lost cause'

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN

© 2011 New York Times

RICHMOND, Va. — In the climate-controlled archives of the Museum of the Confederacy, here in the city that was once the capital of the Confederate States of America, thousands of artifacts are carefully laid out in protective drawers. There are rag dolls and lace finery, folded uniforms scarred by bullet holes and sword slashes, well-maintained revolvers and gleaming sabers. Also from the Civil War's front lines are the cherished rations of long-dead officers: a handful of colorless coffee beans, a block of chewing tobacco with a musky smell.

Upstairs, in the gallery spaces, are hundreds of other artifacts from the battlefields, plantations and POW camps of 150 years ago: a handmade valentine card, a soldier's autograph album, a bar of homemade soap, a black mourning dress. One recently installed show, "The War Comes Home," is deliberately preoccupied with the intimate, but even the main exhibition's history of the Civil War displays soldiers' letters and blood-stained uniforms alongside descriptions of battles. Here, the war is personal. In the South, it seems, the Civil War is often recollected through relics and



A portrait of Thomas Taylor and brogans shoes on display in "Between the Battles" at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Va. In Virginia, museums of the Civil War struggle to balance evolving attitudes toward Southern traditions and the "Lost Cause." (Andrew Council/The New York Times)

premodern and preindustrial, and so are many of these artifacts. They are reminders of a seemingly pastoral age (even slavery gets a gauzy patina) accompanied by the belongings of those who gave their lives for "the Lost Cause." Mem-

ephemera. In the North the approach is different. Would a comparable Museum of the Union even have enough personal artifacts to fill it?

In the Northern states, the Civil War's traces are more in monuments than in memorabilia. There, the war is not a personal event. Despite its trauma and tragedy, it fulfilled a national function, establishing historical continuity and affirming unity, ensuring that the egalitarian ideals of the founders could one day come to fruition.

For the South, though, the Civil War is just the opposite, partly because the South was where the war was mostly fought, partly because it overturned



A graphic, depicting the 1864 Battle of Kernstown, on display in the exhibit "An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia," at the Virginia Historical Society, in Richmond, Va.

(Andrew Council/The New York Times)

Southern institutions. The war was a cataclysm that shattered history's continuity.

The antebellum South was

orabilia and relics are a Southern mode of remembrance, because they are what is left after the Fall.

This year, when sesquicen-

ennial commemorations of the Civil War began, I took a look at Southern museums and their portrayal of the war and often felt as if the differences between Northern and Southern interpretations could scarcely be overcome, as if the war were being continued by other means.

I have returned because it is worth taking a look at Southern attempts to bridge this gap. You can sense the struggle here in the Museum of the Confederacy, just as, in a different way, it is the focus of a major exhibition at the Virginia Historical Society, also in Richmond: "An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia." That 3,000-square-foot show, with its 200 artifacts, interactive displays and explorations of lives affected by the war, will close later this month but will tour Virginia into 2015.

But if there is any success in the reconciliation of regional history and national history, it will not come easily. The Museum of the Confederacy embodies the conflict in its very origins; its artifacts were accumulated in the midst of grief.

The museum's first solicitation for donations, in 1892, four years before its opening, is telling: "The glory, the hardships, the heroism of the war were a noble heritage for our children. To keep green such memories and to commemorate such virtues, it is our purpose to gather together and preserve in the Executive Mansion of the Confederacy the sacred relics of those glorious days. We appeal to our sisters throughout the South to help us secure these invaluable mementoes before it's too late." □

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Leaders in the community are invited to come:

Aruba launches "One Happy Community"



Prime Minister of Aruba Mike Eman.

ORANJESTAD - "One Happy Community" will kick off this morning at 9am at the Crystal Theater in the Renaissance and the rest of the event will be held at various locations over Aruba, on the 6th, the 7th and the 8th of December, 2011. The Prime Minister of Aruba, Mike Eman, has a deep interest in promoting a stronger sense of community

in Aruba. He has worked toward this goal while simultaneously pursuing what he believes are the complementary objectives of urban renewal, inclusiveness, sustainable economic development and a greater reliance on renewable energy and imbedding Aruba's future and security in strong relationship with the Kingdom of the Netherlands



Speaker Harvard Professor Robert Putnam.

and European Union: activities which will increase the quality of life for all Arubans and create a stronger community. The title of the conference is "Happy Community". The name is derived from Aruba's famous tourism slogan "One Happy Island" but the conference will probe even deeper than the famous Aruban hospitality displayed to visitors and tourists. The purpose of the conference is to examine means for Aruba to stimulate wider participation in its social and civic networks in a way that will generate greater productivity, health and happiness among its citizens. Aruba intends to help pro-

mote these principles by serving as an international forum for the exchange of ideas. By hosting this Conference, Aruba hopes not only to gain greater insight into its own society, but also to start a regional dialogue on this important issue, which, while widely discussed in the United States and Europe, has not been a topic of discussion for the Caribbean and Latin American region. Aruba has attracted Harvard Professor Robert Putnam to be one of the keynote speakers. Other international speakers are Prof. Evelien H. Tonkens, a Dutch sociologist, and Mr. Edgar Davids to name a few.

The themes to be addressed during the successive conference days are "Community Engagement and Active Citizenship: Local experiences of social participation and community commitment", "Corporate-Community Networks: Company and local community relationship, synergies and cooperation" and "Building stronger communities: Positive and proactive communication to build the community". For detailed information, and for registration, you are invited to visit our website: www.happycommunity.aw. □

Astrid Sowma enjoys a very happy 75th birthday at Amazonia Churrascaria



Palm Beach – Much-loved mother and Grandmother Astrid Sowma, enjoyed a lavish birthday celebration at Amazonia Churrascaria as her eight children congregated here on the special occasion, some arriving from Suriname in South America and from the USA, followed by eighteen grandchildren.

Two great-grandchildren too young to attend parties sent their love, just before falling asleep! All family members convened for the special celebration over delicious dinner of perfectly grilled meats, Rodizio style, and cocktails, as a BIG surprise for the Matriarch who was told it would be a more casual family gathering.

The reception, with French pink Nectar Imperial Champagne was followed by numerous trips to the



salad bar and full dinner service by the friendly carvers and servers of Amazonia Churrascaria and dancing with live DJ mixing.

The planning started by email and phone, then Luiza, the event-planning sibling, arrived here four days ahead of the party to conclude the final details and give the party a special

personal 'family' touch, attesting to strong bonds between members, as reflected in the spectacular room decoration.

The flowering private dining room was a total surprise for Astrid, as she walked in to Celine Dion's music, her favorite vocalist.

Following the Champagne toast she became emotion-

al as Mariachi Perla Aruba entered the room singing some of her favorites.

On the dance floor, after dinner, Astrid showed her grandchildren that she's still in top shape.

The Sowmas can trace their roots to the first Lebanese Maronites who came to Suriname in the 1890s, mostly from the Bcharre and Baza-

oun municipalities in Lebanon.

They are successful business people with doctors and economists among them, who contribute generously to their communities, and to charities, and can regularly be found on the boards of most service clubs, as active members. □

The Radisson acknowledges excellence its Yes, I can champions

Palm Beach -- The refreshed and newly reopened Sunset Grille Restaurant hosted a group of executives and associates for lunch just recently, celebrating the achievements of those whose performance excelled during July, August & September, the months leading to the reopening of the Aruba Tower, following renovations. A number of individuals distinguished themselves in July with Milaine Jourdain, Housekeeping, and Angele Petronia, Security, among them. The one who earned the Colleague of the Month title for July, Fernando Gomez, nominated by Raynold Semeleer, gained praise in his position as Chief Steward, for balancing all of his

tasks, and never dropping any projects entrusted to him. Additionally, Fernando always makes time for community projects such as Family Fun Day at Arashi, helping with the setup and breakdown promptly and efficiently.

For August, Gloria Maduro, Larimar Spa, Maria Medina, Jean Pierre Colina, and Juan Vasquez, all three from the Food & Beverage department outshone all others in their areas of responsibility however Omar Castaneda, a floor care specialist, received top honors as Colleague of the Month, nominated by Bibi, Fayola and Jessica at the helm of the Housekeeping department, for his role during the refresh of both the

Curacao and the Bonaire towers, and for his many contributions to room maintenance and upkeep.

For September Joselito Lacle, Casino, Steve Lacle, Ramon Weindal, and Virgilio Flores, all three from the Food & Beverage department distinguished themselves for their excellent work, however Mary Rose Briezen earned the Colleague of the Month title for her Guest Service activities, projecting helpfulness and dedication, using her skills to enroll group members in the Club Carlson, the hotel reward program, and providing top notch service.

The party at the Sunset Grille featured accolades and delicious food, a well deserved celebration of



progress and accomplishment attended by General

Manager Rob Smith and the executive committee.

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Nose Flash: a super shopping bag for the Clown Doctors of Aruba



A new, very colorful shopping bag is now available at three great stores on Aruba: DA, Top-1-Toys and Bruna, all three located next to each other on the Boulevard. It is a bag with a story behind it: it's a fun(d) raising bag, made by Curaçao artist Andre Nagtegaal and the proceeds will go to aid the CliniClowns and the Clown Doctors of Aruba. The work of the clowns consists of bringing rays of sunshine, getting a laugh or a smile when they visit the children's ward of the hospital, the mentally challenged kids and the elderly on the island.

The idea of the bag has come from the CliniClowns, the clowns' colleagues from our sister island Curaçao, where the bag sale has already started at Zuikertuin Mall. Each year a new, limited edition bag will come out so that peo-

ple who wish to support the CliniClowns and Clown Doctors will be able to start a collection. BDO, Stradius, Refineria Isla Curaçao BV and the CliniClowns are sponsors of this fun 'collectors' item' project.

Artist Andre Nagtegaal is well-known on Curaçao and abroad. His paintings depict typical Caribbean scenes with multicultural aspects. The boxes with the colorful bags arrived at DA, Top-1-Toys and Bruna last Friday; a good reason to raise a glass of bubbly with the three store managers and their teams and happy president of the Clown Doctors of Aruba Peter Ballière and one of his crew of clowns.

The bags are for sale for AWG. 12,50; they surely will make an impact when filled with presents and carried by Zwarte Piet or beneath the Christmas tree. □

You are invited to the Bon Bini Festival tonight



ORANJESTAD - The weekly Bon Bini Festival takes place tonight at the Fort Zoutman in Wilhelminastraat. Bon Bini is the only weekly folkloric event on the island. Come mingle

with the locals and enjoy a taste of Aruban culture. This week the festival will feature the traditional Aruba caha di orgel by Nos Ambiente, folkloric music by Grupo Stimami, dance

performance by Masiduri, Gaita performance by Las Uncas, soloist Quincy Hasham and brass band TBS. The event will be hosted by Ryan Maduro. During the festival there will

be local food, sweets and traditional local arts and crafts on sale. Arubus has regular buses from all hotels areas to Oranjestad Central Terminal, which is only a short

walk from Fort Zoutman. Round trip bus fare is \$2.30. The festival is from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Entrance fee is \$3. Come and experience a taste of our 'dushi' Aruba. □

Catch your own dinner with Driftwood!

Motto at Driftwood Restaurant: "From the pier to your plate!"



ORANJESTAD - The downtown marina is home of Driftwood Fishing Charters, the successful fishermen of the established seafood restaurant Driftwood in Oranjestad.

Driftwood owner Herby

Merryweather has a love and passion for fishing. A fisherman who knows about fish, what our local waters have to offer, and what the words "fresh seafood" really mean. What Herby catches will be served in his restaurant on the same day. Herby loves to share his fishing passion with the many visitors to the island. His fleet of a 35 ft. Twin Engine Bertram yacht and a 50 ft. Twin Engine Post yacht, appropriately called "Driftwood I and II, is available for charters on a daily basis from 8am to 12 noon and from 1 pm to



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5pm.
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A charter includes: captain, mate, all fishing equipment, bait, sodas and bottled water. On a full day charter sandwiches and snacks are also included. You can call Herby directly at (297) 592 4040 or go to www.driftwoodaruba.com.
Driftwood Restaurant

This authentic Aruban seafood restaurant is located in characteristic downtown Oranjestad. Their extended menu has been jubled by many. Driftwood offers daily specials, as well as a delicious 3-course menu for just \$24.
Charter deep sea fishing rates:
\$400 - 1/2 day

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Rates per boat
Max. 6 people
Driftwood Restaurant
Authentic Aruban Seafood Restaurant; Klipstraat 12, Downtown Oranjestad
Tel: (297) 583 2515
www.driftwoodaruba.com
Opening hours: every day, but Tuesdays from 5pm till 10:30pm. □



Santo elected to Hall of Fame by Vets committee

St. Louis Cardinals fan James Freund takes a picture of the Wrigley Field marquee after it was announced that Chicago Cubs third baseman Ron Santo was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame, Monday, Dec. 5, 2011, in Chicago. Santo joins former Cubs teammates Ernie Banks, Billy Williams, and Ferguson Jenkins.

Associated Press
Page 21



Lindsey Vonn, of the United States, waves the American flag on the podium after her first place finish at the women's World Cup downhill ski race event, Friday, Dec. 2, 2011, in Lake Louise, Alberta.

Associated Press

A surging Lindsey Vonn finds respite on the slopes

PAT GRAHAM
AP Sports Writer

BEAVER CREEK, Colorado (AP) — Lindsey Vonn remains on top of her game despite the turmoil in her life. She dominated at Lake Louise last weekend, winning two World Cup downhill and a super-G by a combined margin of 3.82 seconds — a landslide in skiing. Her success comes in the midst of divorce proceedings from her husband of four years, Thomas Vonn, who also served as her adviser and personal coach. But if the tumult is affecting her, Vonn certainly isn't showing it on the slopes. Now, the Olympic gold medalist returns to the comfort of home as she races in a rescheduled super-G on Wednesday at Beaver Creek.

Continued on Page 18

WILD RALLY



Minnesota comes from 2 down to beat Anaheim 5-3

Minnesota Wild goalie Josh Harding, left, blocks a shot by Anaheim Ducks right wing Teemu Selanne during the third period of an NHL hockey game in Anaheim, Calif., Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011.

Associated Press
Page 19

Woods' win at least was significant to him

DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

THOUSAND OAKS, California (AP) — Earl Woods

could blow smoke with the best of them, yet it was always entertaining.

Such was the case years ago when he was raving about how Tiger Woods thoroughly enjoyed the biggest stage in golf, because his son knew he could perform under pressure. But if it that were true, then how did Woods butcher the final round of the Quad City Classic when he had a chance to win in his third start as a pro? "It took me awhile to figure out why he didn't win," Earl Woods said in a 2003 interview. "Then it dawned on me and I told my wife, 'Tiger is going to win in Las Vegas.' Because in his subconscious mind, he did not want to win his first tournament in some ... place like Quad Cities."

Woods ended the longest drought of his career — 26 tournaments without a win over 749 days — at the Chevron World Challenge, and whether that



United States' Lindsey Vonn crests a rise during the women's World Cup super-G ski race Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011, at Lake Louise, Alberta.

Associated Press

was the ideal place for him to finally pose with a trophy again depends on the perspective. In one respect, he came full circle at Sherwood Country Club.

This was the first tournament that Woods skipped in the immediate aftermath of Thanksgiving night 2009, when his personal life imploded. And it was at this tournament last year when he blew a four-shot lead and lost to Graeme McDowell in a playoff, a sign that something wasn't quite right with his game.

On Sunday, he looked like the Woods of old by making clutch birdie putts on the last two holes to beat Zach Johnson, who played bogey-free on the back nine. Then again, Johnson was one of only 17 players Woods had to beat at Sherwood. Even though the Chevron World Challenge had 11 of the top 25 players in the world ranking — the most of any tournament in the world last week — some of the easiest events to win have the smallest fields. □

Lindsey Vonn

Continued on Page 18

The Birds of Prey course is just five minutes from her place in Vail.

"I really would love to win at home, so I'm going to look at the video and make sure in Beaver Creek that I clean some turns up and make sure I'm skiing a little more aggressive than I skied (Sunday)," Vonn said. That performance is going to be difficult to top. She crushed it in Lake Louise, winning her 11th race on that hill. So commanding has Vonn been at the venue that it's now kiddingly become known as Lake Lindsey.

With her three-day sweep, Vonn now has 45 career wins, leaving her one behind Austria's Renate Goetschl for third on the career list.

"This whole weekend I had a huge smile on my face," Vonn said.

A reprieve from what has been going on away from the slopes.

Vonn announced her split Nov. 27, the same day she withdrew from a slalom in Aspen. She cited a back injury during training.

Many wondered how she would fare without Thomas Vonn, who had become a rock in her life. He made sure she wasn't overextending herself with appearances and interviews, helped with logistics and kept everything running smooth so Vonn could keep her focus on speeding down the mountain.

A network of family, friends, coaches, teammates has now stepped in and supported her through a difficult time.

Yet even this weekend was more than Vonn could have imagined. She won a downhill Friday by 1.95 seconds, her largest margin in that discipline. And with her win Sunday, Vonn earned the second three-day sweep of her career. She also had a hat trick at Haus im Ennstal, Austria, in January 2010.

Not only that, but she ex-



United States' Lindsey Vonn crests a rise during the women's World Cup super-G ski race Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011, at Lake Louise, Alberta.

Associated Press

tended her lead in the World Cup standings to 422 points, opening a sizable gap on top rival Maria Hoefl-Riesch, who ended Vonn's reign as overall champion last season.

"It's definitely a lot more than I expected considering everything that's going on," Vonn said after the race Sunday. "I didn't come into this race ex-

pecting this. Now I'm leaving here with a lot of confidence going into my home race, feeling good and ready to compete."

It's not often Vonn gets to compete in her backyard. The race was moved to Beaver Creek because of a lack of snow in Val d'Isere, France. There's also a men's giant slalom Tuesday and a men's slalom

Thursday.

Vonn has never really raced on the hill, but did side-slip the course during the 1999 championships. The only U.S. female skier who really has taken a race-related run on the course is Resi Stiegler, a forerunner for the men's super-G in 2007.

"Hopefully, I can take this momentum with me to Beaver Creek and finally get a win in my hometown," Vonn said.

Vonn isn't the only skier entering the super-G on a roll. Teammate Julia Mancuso finished third in Lake Louise on Sunday. Like Vonn, Mancuso is eager to attack the course.

"The hill looks really challenging so I think it will be a lot of fun," Mancuso said. "Watching the men's race, it was very turny, steep and always moving — and that's the kind of hill I like." Same with Vonn. Although, just about every hill seems to suit her these days. She also won the season-opening giant slalom in Soelden,

Omae wins Las Vegas Marathon

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Peter Omae of Kenya won the men's race and Zsolia Erdelyi of Hungary earned first on the women's side as Sunday's Las Vegas Marathon finished up at night for the first time.

Omae completed the course in 2 hours, 29.12 seconds while Erdelyi clocked 2:28.58 as an event-record 44,000 runners raced on the Las Vegas Strip at night for the first time.

Omae ran on Saturday night to prepare.

"I never ran in marathon during the evening before so I went out and practiced," the 33-year-old Omae said.

"This was the hardest race I ever ran in. It's much harder to run in the evening." The marathon started at 4 p.m. local time, rather than its usual start at 7 a.m.

Omae passed then-leader Nick Hird at 16.5 miles (26.5 kilometer) in front of Circus-Circus Casino.

"Around 14 or 15 miles, he started slowing down. I saw another guy pushing behind us, so I pushed it," said Omae, who won the inaugural Seattle Marathon in 2010.

Omae pulled away later as America's Clay Wing came in second at 2:35.23. Hird finished out of the top 10.

The 23-year-old Erdelyi struggled to walk after finishing the race. She won the Long Beach Half Marathon in October.

Melanie Peters finished second in 2:49.37.

There were an estimated 100,000 spectators and 32 bands playing along the route. Sixty couples planned to marry during the event.

America's Sean Houseworth won the men's half marathon in 1:03.12. Benita Willis of Australia was the women's half winner in 1:10.40.

The top nine men and top seven women in the half marathon qualified for the Olympic Half Marathon Trials on Jan. 14 in Houston. □

NHL Roundup

Johnson lift Wild past Ducks, 5-3

ANAHEIM, California (AP)

— Nick Johnson scored the go-ahead goal with 5:31 left in the third period, and Casey Wellman and Pierre-Marc Bouchard scored 32 seconds apart in the second period, to lead the Minnesota Wild to a 5-3 victory over the Anaheim Ducks 5-3 on Sunday.

Dany Heatley scored a power-play goal and Kyle Clutterbuck added a short-handed empty-netter with 10.2 seconds left for Minnesota in the opener of a five-game trip. Matt Cullen added three assists for Minnesota against his former club, and Josh Harding made 24 saves.

The victory put the Wild atop the overall NHL standings with 37 points under rookie coach Mike Yeo. They are off to their best start in the franchise's 11-year history at 17-7-3, and have won four straight and nine of 11 — a stretch that began with a 3-2 win over the Ducks on Nov. 13 at Anaheim. Ryan Getzlaf, Saku Koivu and Cam Fowler scored for Anaheim and Jonas Hiller made 31 saves in his 200th regular-season



Minnesota Wild right wing Brad Staubitz, right, lands a punch on Anaheim Ducks' Jean Francois Jacques during the first period of an NHL hockey game in Anaheim, Calif., Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011.

Associated Press

game. Teemu Selanne appeared in his 800th regular-season game with the club.

AVALANCHE 4, RED WINGS 2

At Denver, Ryan O'Reilly had two goals and Semyon Varlamov made 27 saves as Colorado beat Detroit to end the Red Wings' winning streak at seven games.

Paul Stastny and T.J. Galiar-

di also scored, and Gabriel Landeskog added two assists to help Colorado win its third straight. Henrik Zetterberg and Johan Franzen scored for Detroit, and Ty Conklin made 31 saves.

Galiardi got the winner while Colorado killed off Ryan Wilson's minor penalty. Landeskog carried the puck into the Detroit zone,

dropped it to the trailing Galiardi and he beat Conklin with a slap shot from the top of the circle with 10:38 left. It was Colorado's fourth short-handed goal of the season.

Detroit pulled Conklin for an extra skater with a minute left and O'Reilly scored into the empty net with 34 seconds left. □



In this Oct. 24, 2011 file picture French boxer Jean-Marc Mormeck, right, poses with world title holder Ukrainian Wladimir Klitschko, during a press conference held in Paris.

Associated Press

FRANKFURT, Germany

(AP) — WBO, IBF and WBA heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko pulled out of his fight against French challenger Jean-Marc Mormeck on Monday after undergoing two op-

erations in two days to remove a kidney stone.

The fight had been scheduled for Saturday in Duesseldorf.

Klitschko's promoter, Bernd Boente, said Monday that March 3 was a possible new

Wladimir Klitschko-Mormeck fight canceled

date for the fight. The IBF would have to approve it because nominally Klitschko would be requested to fight a mandatory challenger on that date.

"We hope to know in two or three days. Mormeck is also ready to accept it," Boente said, adding that Klitschko was "deeply disappointed" by having to call off the fight.

Klitschko had abdominal pain at his training camp in Austria on Friday. The 35-year-old Ukrainian was taken to Innsbruck for initial treatment before being transferred to a Dueseldorf hospital. The stone was removed Saturday but Klitschko returned to the hospital Sunday before a scheduled television appearance.

His older brother Vitali, the WBC champion, appeared on the live program and said Wladimir was taken ill shortly before the show and returned to the Dueseldorf hospital.

Dr. Peter Albers, the chief urologist at the Dueseldorf University Hospital, said Klitschko was doing well and did not have pain any longer.

"But he is very weak after two surgeries and it makes no sense to have a fight now," Albers said.

The 39-year-old Mormeck is a former WBC and WBA unified cruiserweight champion. He has won all his fights since moving to the heavyweight division in 2009. He has a career record of 36 wins (22 KOs) and four defeats. □

AP source: Reyes, Marlins agree at \$106 million

DALLAS (AP) — Jose Reyes is speeding to the suddenly splurging Miami Marlins.

The All-Star shortstop became the second top free agent to land with the Marlins in a matter of days, agreeing Sunday night to a \$106 million, six-year contract, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press.

After adding All-Star closer Heath Bell for \$27 million over three years, the Marlins gave the NL batting champion a deal that includes a club option for 2018 that would make the contract worth \$120 million, the person said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the agreement had not yet been announced.

Preparing to move into a \$515 million retractable-roof ballpark, the Marlins hired Ozzie Guillen as their manager and have become a driving force in the market ahead of the winter meetings, which start Monday. With Prince Fielder and Albert Pujols the remaining high-profile hitters on the market, they hope to land another big bat. Pu-



In this Sept. 29, 2010, file photo, New York Mets shortstop Jose Reyes reacts after hitting a double during the first game of a baseball doubleheader against the Milwaukee Brewers at Citi Field in New York.

Associated Press

jols, like Reyes, already has toured the new stadium — which opens when the

Marlins host the Cardinals on April 4.

Reyes is following Francisco

Rodriguez and Carlos Beltran out of New York, leaving David Wright and Johan Santana as the Mets' last remaining stars. Mets general manager Sandy Alderson began hearing rumors of the deal Sunday afternoon.

"If the numbers are what are speculated and Jose does leave us, I don't think people will be surprised that under those circumstances he went elsewhere. It doesn't mean they'll be happy about it," said Alderson, who spoke with Reyes' agents earlier in the day. "There was an indication to me that things were moving. Exactly how far. I didn't ask. I didn't need to."

Reyes signed with New York at age 16 and last year become the Mets' first NL batting champion, when he hit .337 and topped the league with 16 triples, while stealing 39 bases.

The 28-year-old is a four-time All-Star and three-time stolen base champion. But he has been prone to injuries in recent seasons, particularly to his hamstrings. He has not played more than 133 games in any of

the last three years, averaging 98.

His arrival in Miami, where the Marlins will be wearing new brightly colored uniforms, likely means three-time All-Star Hanley Ramirez will be shifting from shortstop to third base.

Reyes received the second-nine figure deal of the offseason, following center fielder Matt Kemp's \$160 million, eight-year contract to stay with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Reyes' departure is another blow to the Mets, who went 77-85 in their third straight losing season. Attendance at Citi Field dropped to 2.35 million, down about 7 percent from last year and their lowest since 2004, when they played at Shea Stadium.

Alderson said the Mets never made a formal offer to Reyes, who is coming off a deal that paid him \$32.4 million over five years.

"I don't believe Mets' fans will be surprised if these reports are true that Jose may not be back," he said. "You have to draw a line somewhere and based on our experience, not just with

Jose — but with multiyear contracts generally, and not just with our multiyear contracts, but all multiyear contracts generally — we decided that there were some conceptual limitations to where we would go." Alderson became general manager when Omar Minaya was fired after the 2010 season. The Wilpon family that owns the Mets has been sued by the trustee trying to recover money for the victims of the Bernard Madoff Ponzi scheme, and he is seeking to recover up to \$386 million from the Mets' ownership group. "Bernie Madoff and his specter are always referenced in these situations. I really don't really think that Madoff has that much to do with this," Alderson said. "But when a team loses \$70 million, irrespective of Bernie Madoff or anyone else, that's probably a bigger factor in our approach to this season and the next couple than anything else." □

Ramirez suspension to be 50 games

RONALD BLUM
AP Sports Writer

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida

(AP) — Manny Ramirez's Major League Baseball suspension for a second failed drug test was cut Sunday from 100 games to 50 because he sat out nearly all of last season. Having already served a 50-game ban for violating baseball's drug agreement in 2009, Ramirez faced a 100-game suspension last year for a second offense. But rather than serve the penalty, the 12-time All-Star told the commissioner's office he was quitting. MLB announced his retirement on April 8 and said merely he was notified "of an issue" under the drug program. "As a condition of his reinstatement, Ramirez will be required to resolve his outstanding violation," the MLB commissioner's of-

fice said in a statement.

The suspension would start with the first game he is eligible to play after signing with a club. He would in effect wind up serving a 206-game suspension — the final 156 games of 2011 plus the first 50 of 2012.

Ramirez also is hiring new agents, Barry Praver and Scott Shapiro. Represented by Jeff Moorad when he signed a \$160 million, eight-year contract with Boston before the 2001 season, Ramirez later used Scott Boras. Fourteenth on the career list with 555 home runs, Ramirez is nearing his 40th birthday on May 30. He was just 1 for 17 (.059) in five games last season for the Tampa Bay Rays, who had signed him to a one-year deal worth \$2.02 million. After coming up to the majors with Cleveland in 1993,



Manny Ramirez, new team member of the Chicago White Sox, tightens up his gloves as he prepares for batting practice prior to the White Sox MLB American League baseball game against the Cleveland Indians in Cleveland, Ohio August 31, 2010.

Ramirez helped the Red Sox end their title drought in 2004, when he was the World Series MVP, and he won a second championship with Boston in 2007. He was traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers in July 2008 and

became a fan favorite, but was claimed off waivers by the Chicago White Sox in August 2010.

Ramirez was arrested in September in Florida on a domestic battery charge involving his wife. □

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Santo elected to Hall of Fame by veterans panel

By BEN WALKER |

DALLAS (AP) — Ron Santo always kept rooting for the causes dearest to him — for his Chicago Cubs to win the World Series, for doctors to find a cure for diabetes and for him to reach the Hall of Fame. On Monday, Cooperstown finally came calling.

The barrel-chested third baseman who clicked his heels in victory was elected to the Hall, overwhelmingly chosen by the Veterans Committee nearly a year to the day after he died hoping for this very honor.

"It's really exciting because so many years that we had parties over to his house in spring training saying this is the year, I'd tell him this is the year you're going in," said Hall of Fame teammate Billy Williams, a member of the voting panel.

"The one thing, of course, is he's not here to enjoy it, but his family will. He long awaited this, and we're all happy. I know I'm happy, his family is happy, the fans of Chicago are happy," he said. Santo was a nine-time All-Star, hit 342 home runs and won five Gold Gloves. He was a Cubs broadcaster for two decades, beloved by the home crowd for the way he eagerly cheered for his favorite team on the air, hollering "Yes! Yes!" or "All right!" after good plays and groaning "Oh, no!" or "It's bad!" when things went wrong. Shortly after the announcement, Santo's flag — white with blue pinstripes, plus his name and No. 10 — was flying from the center pole atop the scoreboard

at Wrigley Field.

"There was always kind of a missing piece of the puzzle of Cubs' history," team owner Tom Ricketts said. Santo breezed in with 15 votes from the 16-member panel that met at baseball's winter meetings. It took 75 percent — 12 votes — to get chosen.

"I've got tears in my eyes writing this: congrats to the Santo family on Ron's election to MLB Hall of Fame. A good day to be a Cub fan," tweeted Chicago-area rocker Billy Corgan, frontman for the Smashing Pumpkins.

Santo died Dec. 3, 2010, from complications of bladder cancer at age 70. He had diabetes, which eventually cost him both legs below the knees, and worked tirelessly to raise millions for research into the disease.

Williams was on the line when Santo's widow, Vicki, got the congratulatory phone call.

"Ron has passed, but it was always his dream, to even have this come to him after his passing. It just shows you can't give up," she said during a conference call from Arizona.

"All he said (was) I hope I get in in my lifetime, that's certainly a reasonable request for anybody who gets an honor as special as this one. Unfortunately, it wasn't meant to be," she said. "With his lifetime every disappointment that came along, he was very disappointed."

Said daughter Linda Brown: "I know, even if my dad



In this 1971 file photo, Chicago Cubs infielder Ron Santo is shown in Scottsdale, Ariz. Santo has been elected to the baseball Hall of Fame by the Veterans Committee. The Hall announced the voting results Monday, Dec. 5, 2011, at the winter meetings in Dallas. Associated Press

were here today, he would never reflect on any of the wrongdoings, so to speak. ... There would be no bitterness, it would just be him being happy, and I believe he is."

Santo joined former Cubs teammates Ernie Banks, Ferguson Jenkins and Williams in the Hall. That famed quartet did most everything at the Friendly Confines through the 1960s and early 1970s except bring a World Series to the ivy-covered ballpark.

"With Ernie, myself and Fergie, those players he

played with ... to hear this kind of news today that he's inducted in the baseball Hall of Fame is really gratifying because so many times that we talked about it, it's a place he wanted to be," Williams said.

Santo will be inducted into Cooperstown on July 22, along with any players elected by members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America on Jan. 9. Bernie Williams joins Jack Morris, Barry Larkin and others on that ballot.

"This is a great day for baseball and for Cubs

fans everywhere," Commissioner Bud Selig said in a statement. "Ron was a staple of the Cubs' experience every single day for decades."

"I always admired Ron's courage and loyalty, and I miss him very much," he said.

Jim Kaat was second with 10 votes, Gil Hodges and Minnie Minoso each drew nine and Tony Oliva got eight on the 10-person Golden Era ballot. Buzzie Bavasi, Ken Boyer, Charlie Finley, Allie Reynolds and Luis Tiant each received under three votes.

Santo never came close to election during his 15 times on the BBWAA ballot, peaking at 43 percent — far short of the needed 75 percent in his last year of eligibility in 1998.

Santo had gotten closer in previous elections by the Veterans Committee. The panel has been revamped several times in the last decade, aimed at giving a better look at deserving candidates. Since his final swing in 1974, Santo's numbers on the field never changed. The perception of what he meant to the game did, though. "From the discussion yesterday, we kind of got in depth," Williams said. "We really, really talked about each individual and some things were brought out, I imagine that wasn't brought out last time, in so far as what he'd done for the game of baseball, the \$60 million he raised for (juvenile diabetes research), all the other stuff we knew." □

US revisits safety of newer birth control drugs

MATTHEW PERRONE
AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Birth control drugs that were heavily promoted as having fewer side effects and the ability to clear up acne and other hormonal bothers are under new scrutiny from U.S. safety regulators. Research suggesting that

popularity in the last decade, including Bayer's pill Yaz, which was the best-selling birth control pill in the U.S. for 2008 and 2009.

Yaz, Yasmin and similar drugs use a version of a female hormone which appears to reduce side effects found in older drugs, including bloating and mood

Bayer to correct advertisements that overstated Yaz's benefits and as safety questions drew scrutiny in both the U.S. and Europe.

FDA also is reviewing research on clot risks associated with Johnson & Johnson's weekly Ortho Evra patch, which is marketed as an "option for busy women who are looking to simplify life." The drug uses a different version of the female hormone progestin.

Millions of women have used the products since they launched a decade ago, but recent studies comparing the medical histories of women taking the newer drugs to older ones suggest a slightly higher risk of blood clots in the legs and lungs. Last year, the U.S. market for female contraceptive drugs totaled \$3.4 billion, according to IMS Health.

Sorting out the blood clot risk of birth control drugs is especially difficult because all hormone-based drugs increase the risk of clotting. Further complicating the matter is that clots can be caused by factors such as smoking, obesity or family history. Yaz, Yasmin and other pills containing a synthetic hormone called drospirenone are the focus of a discussion Thursday. The next day's meeting focuses on the Ortho Evra patch, which uses the hormone norelgestromin. Bayer says its studies have shown no difference in blood clot risk between its drugs and the older birth control drugs. □



Nurse Jozie Kovar, checks the heartbeat of one of eight babies at Jamestown, N.D. Hospital. Birth control drugs that were heavily promoted as having fewer side effects and the ability to clear up acne and other hormonal bothers are under new scrutiny from U.S. safety regulators.

(AP Photo/The Jamestown Sun, John M. Steiner)

newer birth control formulations are more likely to cause blood clots than older drugs has prompted the Food and Drug Administration to consider new safety measures in meetings later this week. The increased risk is slight, but significant because blood clots can cause heart attacks, strokes and blockages in lungs or blood vessels, which can be fatal. Regulators could order new warning labels on several contraceptives that gained

swings. Bayer AG spent more than \$270 million on TV and magazine advertisements for Yaz between 2007 and 2010, according to TNS Media Intelligence. Such big-budget campaigns are rare for birth control products. One advertisement featured young women singing the Twisted Sister anthem, "We're Not Gonna Take It," while popping balloons labeled "moodiness," "bloating" and "acne." Sales of Yaz have fallen since regulators forced

UK leader wants health service to help industry

SYLVIA HUI

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's publicly-funded National Health Service should share all patient data anonymously with private health care companies to boost innovation in a key U.K. industry, Prime Minister David Cameron said Monday. Cameron's proposal was part of an ambitious plan



Britain's publicly-funded National Health Service should share all patient data anonymously with private health care companies to boost innovation in a key U.K. industry, Prime Minister David Cameron said Monday.

to make the public health service work more closely with the pharmaceutical industry, which he said can speed up patient access to new drugs and drive growth in the life sciences sector. But some lawmakers and campaigners oppose the plan, warning that patient privacy may be compromised.

"The aims are laudable ... but the methods of doing this are not at all acceptable," said Joyce Robbins of the charity Patient Concern. "This data is absolutely private — it is not the government's to give."

Cameron said that he wants to change the National Health Service constitution so that data on all patients would by default be made available for research anonymously unless individuals choose not to have their information released.

"The end result will be that every willing patient is a research patient and every time you use the NHS you are playing a part in the fight against disease at home and around the world," he said in a speech. He also said the government would invest 180 million pounds (\$282 million) to shorten the period between the development of new drugs and their use, which can take many years. □

Few teens 'sexting' racy photos, new research says

LINDSEY TANNER
AP Medical Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Teen sexting of nude photos online or via cellphone may be far less common than people think, new research suggests. Only 1 percent of kids aged 10 to 17 have shared images of themselves or others that involve explicit nudity, a nationally representative study found. Roughly the same number said they'd shared suggestive but less graphic photos; while 7 percent said they'd received either type of pic-

ture. The research focused on teens only — not young adults, an age group included in some earlier studies which showed considerably higher sexting participation. The new study suggests texting of sexual photos among younger kids is rare.

The results are reassuring, showing that teen sexting isn't rampant, usually isn't malicious, and is generally not something parents should panic over, said lead author Kimberly Mitchell, a research assistant psychol-

ogy professor at the University of New Hampshire.

Previous reports said as many as 1 in 5 young people, or 20 percent, have participated in sexting. But some surveys included older teens and people in their early 20s. And some used definitions of sexting that included racy text messages without photos, or images "no more revealing than what someone might see at a beach," authors of the new study said.

In the new study, researchers focused only on pic-

tures, and asked more detailed questions about the kinds of racy photos kids are sharing. The researchers did a separate study on how police deal with teen sexting of photos. Contrary to some reports, that research suggests few kids are being prosecuted or forced to register as sex offenders for sexting. It estimates that nearly 4,000 teen sexting cases were reported to police nationwide in 2008 and 2009. Slightly more than one-third of those cases resulted in arrests. About one-

third of all cases involved teens and young adults; the adults were much more likely to be arrested.

The studies were released Monday in the journal *Pediatrics*. The research shows that sexting can range from incidents that some teen health experts consider typical adolescent exploring — the 21st century version of sneaking a look at dad's *Playboy* magazine, to malicious cases with serious consequences made possible by today's technology. □



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Microsoft rolls out Xbox TV platform

RYAN NAKASHIMA

AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) —

Microsoft Corp. is rolling out a new interface for its Xbox game console users — one that allows you to navigate through music, movies, TV shows and games with the wave of your hand or the sound of your voice.

The interface, first demonstrated by CEO Steve Ballmer in September, is set up similarly to Microsoft Corp.'s upcoming Windows 8 operating system with a series of large panes showing content options.

Xbox owners with the Kinect

motion controller can swipe through screens by waving their hand in the air. It also responds to direct voice commands, and incorporates Microsoft's search engine, Bing. Windows phone users can control what to watch or hear by tapping on their portable devices.

The interface will be available to Xbox users connected to the Internet via a download on Tuesday.

In a demonstration for The Associated Press, a Microsoft employee demonstrated how saying, clearly, "Xbox. Bing. 'Iron Man,'" brought up a selection of

movies, TV shows, games and soundtracks related to the title. Saying "Xbox. Show. Movies," brought up places to rent or buy the movie, including Microsoft's Zune store, Wal-Mart's Vudu, Netflix or pay TV channel Epix.

Separate subscriptions are required for services like Netflix, and much of the content also requires being a gold member of Xbox Live, a connected Internet service that costs \$60 a year.

Microsoft expects to have pay TV channel partners, including those supplied by

Facebook hires Gowalla team, will shut it down

BARBARA ORTUTAY

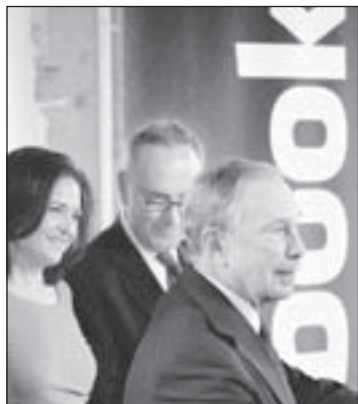
AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) —

Facebook has hired the team behind Gowalla, the location service that lets people share where they are using their mobile phones.

Gowalla started out in 2009 as a way for people to share their location with friends and strangers by "checking in." Now, Facebook will wind down the service, as it often does when buying a startup to hire its talent. It did not acquire the Gowalla service or technology.

Financial terms were not given. Gowalla co-founder Josh Williams said in a blog post that Gowalla will join Facebook in California. Gowalla is currently headquartered in Austin, Texas, a city with a thriving tech scene and the site of the annual South By Southwest Interactive festival, where many startups — including Gowalla — are launched. Gowalla never quite caught on with a large audience, trailing rival Four-



Facebook Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg, left, and Senator Charles Schumer, center, listens as Mayor Michael Bloomberg speak during a news conference on Friday, Dec. 2, 2011, in New York. Facebook announced that New York will be the center of Facebook's new engineering technology initiative.

Associated Press

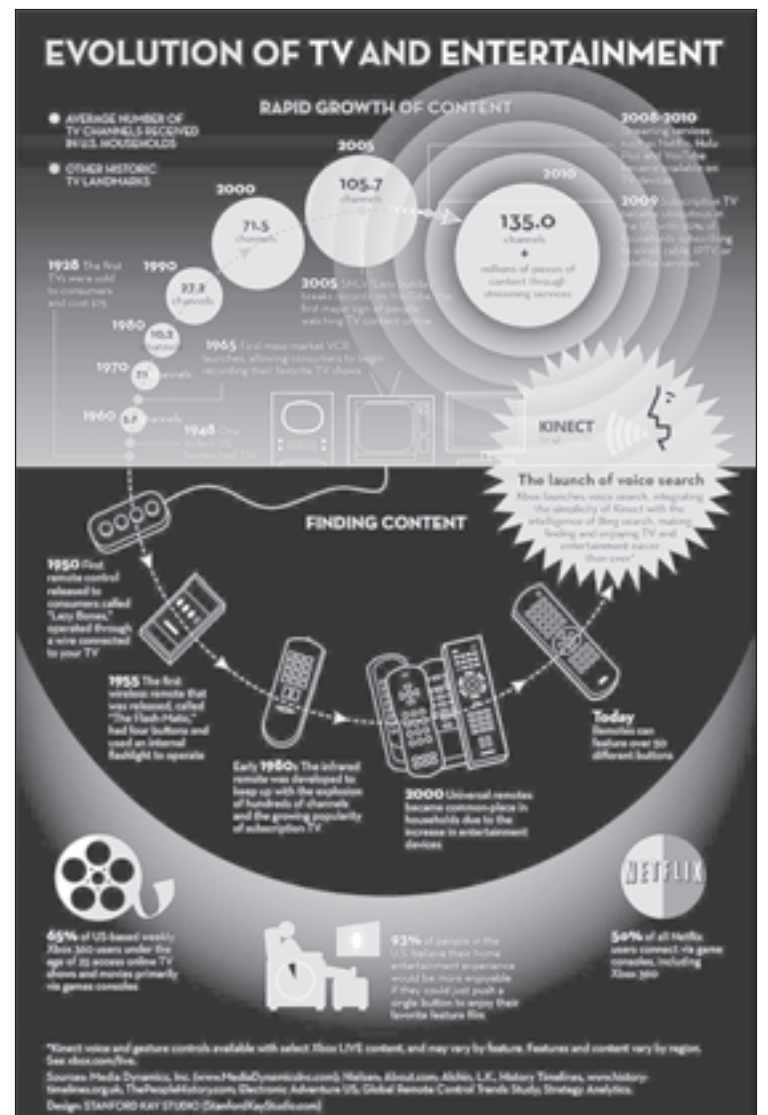
square.

"As we move forward, we hope some of the inspiration behind Gowalla — a fun and beautiful way to share your journey on the go — will live on at Facebook," Williams wrote in the post. Facebook said that Williams co-founder Scott Raymond and others at

Gowalla will move to Facebook in January. The companies would not say how many employees Gowalla has and how many of them are joining Facebook.

The companies didn't specify what projects the Gowalla team will be working on, though Williams' blog post hinted that one might be Timeline. The feature, which will replace users' current profile pages, works like a virtual scrapbook. Curated by the user, it includes photos, posts and other events from the person's life.

"The Gowalla Passport has become a record of all the places we've visited, the people we were with, the photos we took, and the stories we told. Many of you even use Gowalla like a scrapbook of sorts — a place to keep all those memories," Williams wrote. Facebook's latest hires come just days after the Palo Alto, California-based company announced it is opening an engineering office in New York City. □



This infographic is released by AP Images for Xbox. It explores the evolution of TV through the years, including the recent explosion of content choices and evolution of how we control and interact with that content. See how a new era in TV has taken shape and how Microsoft is delivering the ability to find and enjoy TV entertainment with your voice on Xbox 360.

Associated Press

Verizon FiOS. There will be no broadcast partners, so fans of the ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox networks will continue to rely on standard set-top boxes or digital rabbit ear antennas for that content.

Microsoft says there have been 57 million Xbox units sold around the world and there are more than 35 million users who have logged on to its Xbox Live service at least once in the last three months. It did not say how many Xbox Live users are

paying gold members. Ross Honey, general manager of Xbox Live entertainment and advertising, said around 40 content partners were expected for the platform. Available apps from those partners will roll out gradually. Other partners include the British Broadcasting Company, Hulu Plus, Disney's online ESPN3 service, Ultimate Fighting Championship, YouTube and cable giant Comcast Corp.'s Xfinity on-demand subscription service. □

Stocks rise despite threatened Germany downgrade

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks closed modestly higher Monday after a reported threat to Germany's credit rating deflated a morning market rally. The Dow Jones industrial average closed up 78 points, giving back much of a 167-point gain from earlier.

News reports Monday afternoon said Standard & Poor's will put all nations that use the euro on "creditwatch negative," meaning there is a 50-50 chance of a downgrade in the coming months. S&P had warned of possible rating demotions for many of the countries. But the inclusion on the list of Germany, Europe's strongest economy, came as a surprise.

Stocks had risen strongly in the morning after the leaders of France and Germany called for a new treaty to impose greater fiscal discipline on European countries.

Yields on Italian government bonds receded sharply after the new government of Mario Monti introduced sweeping austerity measures over the weekend. That suggests that traders believe Italy is less likely to default.

"There's pent-up demand, and people will use any excuse to get back in, thinking there's been too much pessimism," said Brian Gendreau investment strategist with Cetera Financial Group. Despite strong signals about the U.S. econ-

omy, the market has been weighed down by negative headlines about the U.S. budget impasse, credit-rating downgrades of the U.S. and other nations, and Europe's spreading crisis,

biggest gainer, rising 2.7 percent. Citigroup Inc. rose 5.9 percent, Morgan Stanley 6.8 percent.

The S&P 500 rose 13, or 1 percent, to 1,257. The Nasdaq rose 29, or 1.1 percent,

Chancellor Angela Merkel were far from a long-term solution, investors are eager to buy on any hint of good news because they have been earning meager returns from relatively low-risk investments such as Treasuries and CDs, Gendreau said. Italian bond yields dropped to their lowest level in a month, a day after the nation's new government introduced austerity measures. That suggests traders believe that Italy is far less likely to default. The main Italian stock index jumped 2.9 percent.

Italy's borrowing costs pulled back from a level that might have forced the nation to default. Analysts say bailing out Italy would be too costly and would hurt the credit standing of German and France, which have the strongest economies in the euro group.

The yield on the 10-year Italian bond plunged half a percentage point to 5.93 percent. It rose above 7 percent last month, a level at which other nations were forced to take bailouts. By comparison, bond yields in Germany, Europe's largest and most stable economy, are roughly 2 percent.

Monday's strong gains follow the best week in more than two years for U.S. stock indexes. The S&P 500 rose 7.4 percent last week, the most since March 2009. The Dow jumped 7 percent, the most since July 2009. □



Steven van der Velden, left, Chairman & CEO of Elephant Talk and Pat Carroll, center, CEO of ValidSoft Ltd, meet with specialist Tina Vlitaz on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange as Elephant Talk, from the Netherlands, lists Monday, Dec. 5, 2011, (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

Gendreau said.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 78.41 points, or 0.7 percent, to 12,097.83. The gains were broad. All 10 industry groups in the S&P 500 rose. Financials stocks were among the biggest winners. Investors have feared that U.S. banks might be dragged down by their close connections to the unstable European financial system.

JPMorgan Chase & Co. jumped 3.7 percent, the most in the Dow. Bank of America was the second-

to 2,656.

Investors are hoping that a summit of European leaders on Thursday and Friday will produce concrete measures to prevent a messy breakup of the euro currency, which is shared by 17 nations. Markets have been jittery because of fears that the euro might disintegrate, causing a sharp recession in Europe that would spread through the world economy.

While the statements from French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German



U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, left, shakes hands with Greek President Karolos Papoulias in Athens, Monday, Dec. 5 2011. Biden has begun meetings with political leaders in Greece, at the start of a crucial week for the future of the debt-saddled eurozone. (AP Photo/Orestis Panagiotou, Pool)

Europe: S&P puts 15 countries on credit watch

GABRIELE STEINHAUSER
GREG KELLER

Associated Press
BRUSSELS (AP) — Standard & Poor's is threatening to downgrade the credit rating of 15 eurozone countries, saying the worsening debt crisis is affecting the bloc's strongest economies.

The decision Monday to put 15 eurozone countries, including AAA-rating nations such as Germany and Luxembourg, on watch for a possible downgrade piles pressure on eurozone leaders to find a solution to the currency union's debt troubles at a summit later this week. □

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Store manager Joseph Sublett changes gasoline prices to reflect a three-cent drop at a Little Rock, Ark., Conoco-Phillips station. At the pump, retail gasoline prices slipped by less than a penny to \$3.292 per gallon, according to AAA, Wright Express and Oil Price Information Service.

(AP Photo/Danny Johnston)

Oil price retreats on renewed concerns

CHRIS KAHN
AP Energy Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Oil prices slipped from two-week highs Monday on reports that Standard & Poors may downgrade credit ratings for the wealthiest nations in Europe, dealing a serious blow to hopes for saving the euro.

The Financial Times reported that S&P will put Germany, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, and Luxembourg on notice that it is reviewing their credit worthiness. Each has a one-in-two chance of a downgrade in the next 90 days, the newspaper said. S&P wouldn't comment about the report.

If the credit ratings agency follows through with downgrades, it would suggest that some of the strongest nations in the eurozone will have trouble handling mas-

sive debts run up by their more profligate neighbors. Oil markets reacted swiftly to the news.

Benchmark crude dropped by about 2 percent, or \$2 per barrel, in afternoon trading. After rising as high as \$102.44, the benchmark price ended the day about where it began, at \$100.99 per barrel, up just 3 cents. Prices had been climbing earlier in the day after French and German leaders proposed tough new measures for a eurozone treaty that would keep members from overspending. A recession may be inevitable in Europe, but analysts said the proposal for tighter spending controls, balanced budgets and other measures was an important step in saving the euro and protecting against widespread bank failures. □

Monti to lawmakers:

No alternative to reforms

COLLEEN BARRY
FRANCES D'EMILIO
Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italy's new premier urged Parliament on Monday to swiftly approve his anti-crisis package, including new taxes and pension reforms, warning that the survival of the euro depends on whether the nation makes "strong sacrifices."

Premier Mario Monti, an economist whose technocratic government came into office last month to save Italy from financial disaster, must depend on Parliament's political parties for his success. But the reaction from Italian lawmakers was mixed, even cool, and he was even heckled at times during his appeal.

He told the Chamber of Deputies "there are no alternatives" to the emergency package, which includes €30 billion (\$40.5 billion) in spending cuts and tax hikes, of which €10 billion (\$13.5 billion) would be invested in growth-boosting measures for Italy's flat economy..

The reforms were adopted late Sunday by his Cabinet and go into immediate effect but must be passed within 60 days by Parlia-



Italian Premier Mario Monti delivers his speech at the Senate in Rome, Monday, Dec. 5, 2011. Italy's new premier must try to persuade a skeptical Parliament that his new plan to cut spending and boost growth will return Italy's ailing economy to health as Europe enters a crucial week for future of the euro currency.

(AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

ment or they expire.

Failure to approve the measures would push Italy "into the abyss," Monti warned in a solemn, almost grim voice.

"The eyes of Europe and the world are concentrated on Italy and this hall," the premier added, before renewing the appeal in the Senate, Parliament's upper chamber. "The future of the euro also depends on the choices Italy will make."

Monti pledged that the "strong sacrifices" would be "limited in time, distributed fairly and essential to navigate this difficult moment for society."

Measures sure to be widely unpopular include making Italians work more years before drawing pensions, reviving a home property tax and raising the sales tax next September to 23 percent from 21 percent now. The package apparently pleased the markets. The main stock index in Milan closed 2.9 percent higher, while Italy's benchmark 10-year bond yield dropped sharply, from 6.65 percent on the open to 5.93 percent.

"Without this package, we believe Italy would collapse, Italy would go into a situation like that of Greece, a country we admire but we don't want to imitate," Monti told the Foreign Press Association.

He also promised more reforms later, including opening up Italy's rigid labor market.

But several leading lawmakers from Italy's two biggest parties — center-right and center-left — were critical, although they stopped short of refusing to support Monti's measures. □

Ireland details budget cuts to welfare, health

SHAWN POGATCHNIK
Associated Press

DUBLIN (AP) — Ireland unveiled new spending cuts Monday that will reduce civil servants' pay, increase waiting times for medical services, and lower monthly payments to parents with large families.

Ireland's minister for expenditure and reform, Brendan Howlin, said the government had no choice but to impose €1.4 billion (\$1.9 billion) in spending cuts to health, welfare and other state-funded services as part of Ireland's commitments under terms of its year-old international bailout. The figure represents 2.7 percent of current government spending.

"No government, whatever

its numbers, wants to be the bearer of bad news. But our options are extremely limited. The public knows this," Howlin told lawmakers as he spelled out the first half of Ireland's fourth austerity budget in four years. The second half, detailing €1.6 billion (\$2.15 billion) in tax increases, is coming Tuesday. Ireland last year was forced to negotiate a €67.5 billion (\$92 billion) line of foreign credit after the cost of its bank-bailout program overwhelmed state finances. The EU-IMF loan package is designed to keep Ireland funded through 2013 as the country merges and revives its debt-crippled banks. But as part of that deal, Ireland has promised to reduce its deficit to the eurozone limit

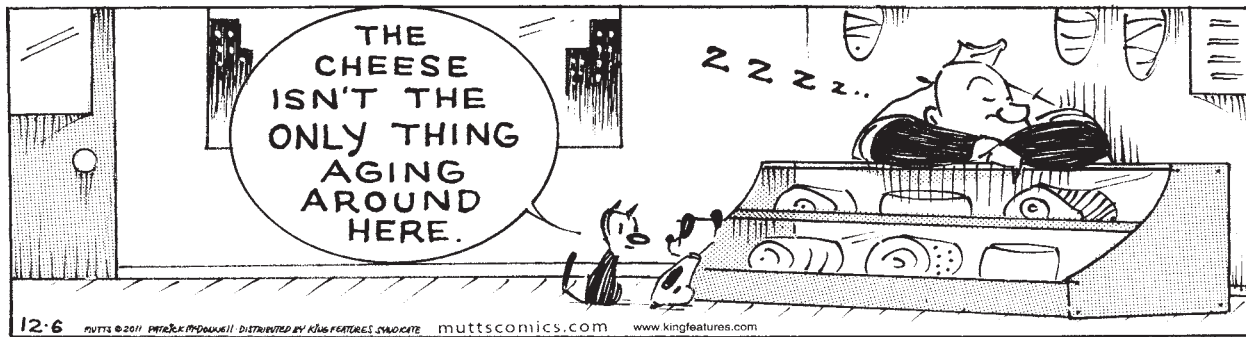
of 3 percent of GDP by 2015 through four more years of austerity.

Ireland is planning €3.8 billion (\$5.1 billion) in total 2012 cuts and tax hikes in the hope of shrinking next year's deficit to 8.6 percent of GDP. Its 2010 deficit surged to a modern European record of 32 percent, reflecting exceptional bank-rescue costs.

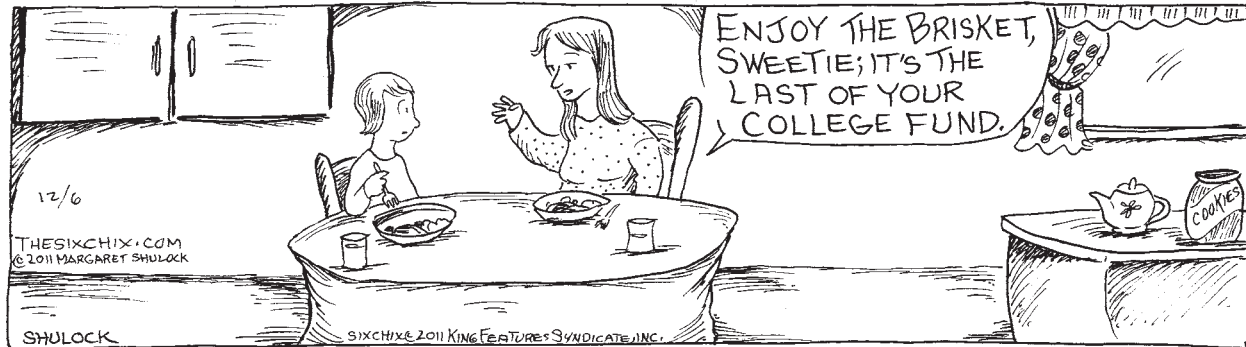
Howlin said the government hoped to reduce this year's total spending of €57.7 billion to €55.8 billion next year, €54 billion in 2013 and €52 billion in 2014.

He said next year's cuts would reduce health costs by €543 million, welfare benefits by €475 million, and education by €132 million. □

Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	6	5				2	7	
	3		6	8	4		1	
6			1		9			7
5			8		2			3
	4		3	2	7		6	
	2	3				8	4	

Difficulty Level ★★

12/06

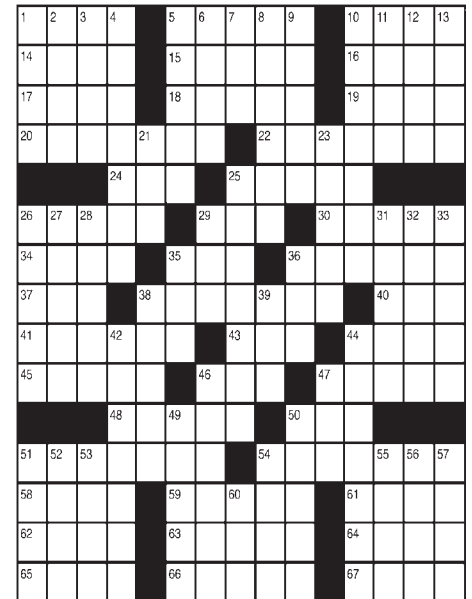
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

7	2	8	3	1	5	6	4	9
3	5	6	9	2	4	7	1	8
9	4	1	6	7	8	2	5	3
5	1	4	2	8	3	9	6	7
8	3	7	4	9	6	5	2	1
2	6	9	7	5	1	3	8	4
4	8	2	5	3	7	1	9	6
1	9	3	8	6	2	4	7	5
6	7	5	1	4	9	8	3	2

ACROSS

- 1 Money owed
- 5 Loud kiss
- 10 Up in __; angry
- 14 Skunk's defense
- 15 Chocolate drink
- 16 Mr. Diamond
- 17 Four and five
- 18 Rotating machine part
- 19 __ place; occur
- 20 Outstanding
- 22 Played on small drum
- 24 Cut off
- 25 Mountaineer's spike
- 26 Jumble up again
- 29 Stinging insect
- 30 Lent a hand
- 34 Raw minerals
- 35 Broadcast
- 36 Group of actors
- 37 Actress/singer __Margret
- 38 Strenuous; requiring effort
- 40 Flour container
- 41 Take the weapons from
- 43 Bro or sis
- 44 Verifiable truth
- 45 Fannies
- 46 Chum
- 47 Pure joy
- 48 Faithful
- 50 Squeezing snake
- 51 Choose a jury
- 54 Enchant
- 58 Bodies of water
- 59 Producer __ Spelling
- 61 Hawaiian feast
- 62 Frilly trim
- 63 Burn
- 64 Terminates
- 65 BPOE members
- 66 Looks after
- 67 Short fast race



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/6/11

Monday's Puzzle Solved

M	A	P	S	A	C	R	E	S	H	E	R	B
E	C	H	O	P	R	I	M	E	A	R	I	A
M	I	L	D	P	E	P	P	E	R	M	I	N
O	D	E	O	A	T	S	O	I	N	K	S	
S	H	O	V	E	L	P	A	R	L	O	R	
N	O	T	E	S	E	P	I	C	S	P	E	P
U	P	O	N	D	R	O	N	E	W	E	I	R
G	E	M	D	I	G	I	T	C	A	R	G	O
D	Y	N	A	M	O	E	R	R	A	N	D	
A	R	E	B	R	A	S	H					
S	I	E	V	E	G	A	R	B	O	F	A	
A	D	D	I	S	A	B	A	B	A	R	U	I
C	E	D	E	R	I	P	E	N	O	S	L	O
K	A	Y	S	K	N	E	L	T	E	E	N	

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12/6/11

DOWN

- 1 Knotts and Ho
- 2 Correct a text
- 3 Tibia or ulna
- 4 Latticework
- 5 Leftover piece
- 6 Heath
- 7 Assume a role
- 8 Lounge
- 9 Unit of fineness for gold
- 10 San __, Texas
- 11 Bring up, as children
- 12 Voice amplifier, for short
- 13 Toboggan
- 21 Cured salmon
- 23 Wild hogs
- 25 Close look
- 26 Streets
- 27 Golfer __ Els
- 28 High-IQ society
- 29 eBay offer
- 31 United Arab Emirates nation
- 32 Classic stories
- 33 Fender marks
- 35 Phonograph part
- 36 Bather's place
- 38 Firebug's crime
- 39 Syrian export
- 42 Map books
- 44 Waved the arms wildly
- 46 King's home
- 47 Present topper
- 49 Bread ingredient
- 50 Is flexible
- 51 __ of Capri
- 52 Repast
- 53 Fill a suitcase
- 54 Gutsy
- 55 Albacore, e.g.
- 56 Scoundrels
- 57 "Be quiet!"
- 60 Trotted

Today In History

Highlights in history on this date:

1534 - Spanish conquistadors establish presence in Quito, an Inca city in the Andes.

1790 - Congress moves from New York City to Philadelphia.

1857 - British forces recapture Cawnpore in India.

1884 - Army engineers complete construction of the Washington Monument.

1906 - Self-government is granted in Transvaal and Orange River colonies in what is now South Africa.

1907 - Frontier between Uganda and East Africa is defined.

1916 - Bucharest, capital of Romania, falls to German troops.

1917 - Republic of Finland is proclaimed; collision between Belgian and French ammunition ships at Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, takes 1,600 lives.

1921 - Britain signs peace treaty with Ireland establishing Irish Free State, and Ireland accepts Dominion status.

1923 - A presidential address is broadcast on radio for the first time as U.S. President Calvin Coolidge speaks to a joint session of Congress.

1929 - Women's suffrage begins in Turkey.

1938 - France and Germany sign pact on inviolability of their frontier.

1941 - U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt appeals for peace to Japan's Emperor Hirohito — one day before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He also authorizes the Manhattan Project, which results in the creation of the atomic bomb.

1947 - Everglades National Park in Florida is dedicated by U.S. President Harry S. Truman.

1957 - America's first attempt at putting a satellite into orbit blows up on the launch pad at Cape Canaveral, Florida.

1959 - U.N. General Assembly says Togoland should receive independence.

1961 - Heavy fighting erupts



Today is James Braddock's birthday

in Congo's Katanga Province between United Nations and Katanga forces.

1966 - Britain calls for United Nations sanctions against rebellious Rhodesia, including ban on oil shipments.

1978 - A referendum approves constitution returning Spain to democracy.

1984 - Death toll rises to 1,600 from gas leak from U.S.-built pesticide plant in Bhopal, India.

1987 - Bangladesh government dissolves Parliament amid opposition campaign to topple President Hussain Mohammad Ershad's administration.

1988 - Sources say ethnic violence kills at least three people and injures six others in southern Soviet republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia.

1989 - Gunman kills 14 women and wounds nine women and four men at University of Montreal before killing himself; car bomb believed to be set by drug traffickers kills 59 in Colombia.

1990 - Gen. Hussain Mohammad Ershad, who ruled Bangladesh for nine years after coming to power in a coup, steps down at the height of a pro-democracy movement.

1993 - Serb forces shell Sarajevo for five hours, taking aim at shoppers bartering for food and mourners burying their dead. Five people are killed and at least 27 wounded.

1997 - Yehuda Gil, an agent for Israel's Mossad spy agency, is found to have been feeding Israelis damaging disinformation on Syria for years. This comes on heels of a September scandal — a botched Mossad assassination of a Palestinian figure in Jordan.

1998 - Six years after staging a bloody coup attempt, former Lt. Col. Hugo Chavez is elected president of Venezuela, dealing a blow to the establishment that ruled the country for 40 years.

1999 - NASA says it has not detected a signal from the Mars Polar Lander, two days after it began its ascent to Mars.

It is later determined that the robot spacecraft was destroyed following a software glitch.

2002 - Israeli forces kills 10 Palestinians, including two United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) school employees, during a pre-dawn incursion into the Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip.

2004 - Islamic militants set off explosives and shoot their way into the heavily guarded U.S. consulate in Jiddah — a bold assault that shows Saudi Arabia's crackdown on terrorists has not succeeded.

2005 - A military plane loaded with Iranian journalists slams into a Tehran apartment building as it attempts to make an emergency landing. At least 115 people are killed including passengers and residents of the building. □

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2 br wk 47 Room: 2009 Pool/ocean \$8500

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Oranjestad 582-4000
Noord 587-0009
Sta. Cruz 585-4710
Savaneta 584-7000
San Nicolas 584-5000

Emergency Numbers
Emergency 911
Police 100
Fire Dept. 115
Fire Dept. II 582-1108
Police Tipline 11141
Hospital 527-4000

Oranjestad
Ambulance 582-1234
Police 582-4000

San Nicolas
Ambulance 584-5050
Police station 584-5000
BGD San Nicolas 584-1606
Valero Security 584-1720

Services
Information 118
Setar 582-5151
Taxi 582-2116
Taxi- Tas 587-5900
Professional Taxi 588-0035
Taxi D.T.S. 587-2300
Service Aruba 583-3232

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(FADA) Tel: 583-2999
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NASA spacecraft exploring solar system's edge

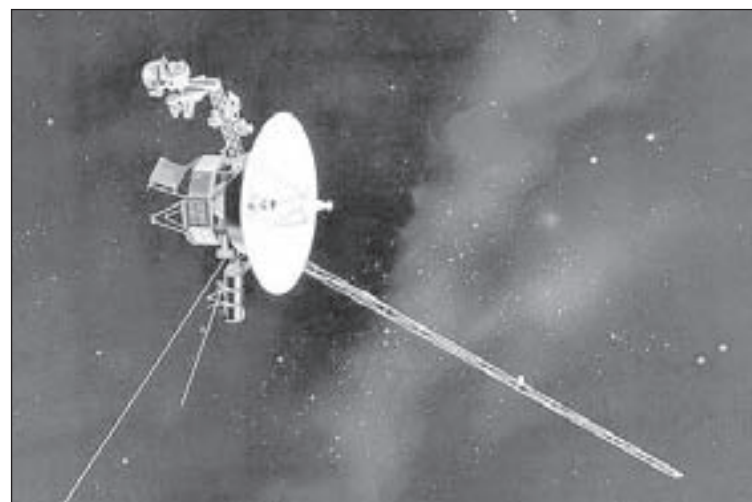
ALICIA CHANG

AP Science Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — More than three decades after launching, NASA's workhorse spacecraft is inching closer to leaving the solar system behind. Currently 11 billion miles away from the

sun, Voyager 1 has been exploring the fringes of the solar system since 2004. Scientists said Monday the spacecraft has entered a new region in the solar system that they have dubbed the "stagnation zone." Voyager 1 still has a little way to

go before it completely exits the solar system and becomes the first man-made probe to cross into interstellar space, or the vast space between stars. The spacecraft has enough battery power to last until 2020, but scientists think it will reach interstellar space before that — in a matter of several months to years. Chief scientist Ed Stone of the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory said the timing is unclear because no spacecraft has ever ventured this far. "The journey continues," Stone told a meeting of the American



This undated file artist's rendering shows one of NASA's twin Voyager and Voyager 2 spacecrafts. More than three decades after launching, NASA's workhorse spacecraft is inching closer to leaving the solar system behind.

Associated Press

Geophysical Union in San Francisco.

For the past year, Voyager 1 used its instruments to explore the new region. It appeared to be the cosmic doldrums where solar winds streaming out from the sun at 1 million mph have dramatically eased and high-energy particles from outside are seeping in — a sign that Voyager 1 is at the doorstep of interstellar space.

Scientists expect to see several telltale signs when Voyager 1 finally crosses the boundary including a change in the magnetic field direction and the type of wind. Interstellar wind is slower, colder and denser than solar wind.

Even with certain expectations, Stone warned that the milestone won't be cut-and-dried. □

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Dunst, Willis, Gere, Sarandon are Sundance-bound

DAVID GERMAIN

AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It'll be a busy shopping season at next month's Sundance Film Festival, whose star-studded premieres are up for grabs by potential theatrical distributors.

Some premieres usually enter the independent-film showcase with U.S. distribution already lined up. But festival director John Cooper said all the premieres that Sundance announced Monday will be looking for distributors.

"I don't think that's ever happened before," said festival director John Cooper. "It makes for a much more exciting buyer's market, I think. At least, lively."

Among Sundance's big-name premieres: Kirsten Dunst's wedding romp "Bachelorette," directed by Leslye Headland; Bruce Willis and Catherine Zeta-Jones' Las Vegas bookie caper "Lay the Favorite," from filmmaker Stephen Frears; Richard Gere and Susan Sarandon's Wall Street saga "Arbitrage," directed by Nicholas Jarecki; Sigourney Weaver and Robert De Niro in Rodrigo Cortes' paranormal thriller "Red Lights"; and actor-director Julie Delpy's "2 Days in New York," co-starring Chris Rock in a follow-up to her 2007 romance "2 Days in Paris."

Sarandon also stars along-



In this film publicity image released by Sundance Film Festival, Gillian Anderson is shown in a scene from, "Shadow Dancer," a film set to premiere at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

Associated Press

side Frank Langella in a second Sundance premiere, director Jake Schreier's geriatric comedy "Robot and Frank," which also features Liv Tyler and James Marsden.

Former "X-Files" partners David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson both have premieres playing Sundance. Duchovny and Vera Farmiga star in Christopher Neil's father-son story "Goats," while Anderson is featured along with Clive Owen and Andrea Riseborough in James Marsh's Irish terrorism tale "Shadow Dancer."

Director Spike Lee, who came to Sundance with his

2009 rock musical "Passing Strange," returns with "Red Hook Summer," the story of an Atlanta boy spending the summer with his grandfather in Brooklyn.

Cooper said the film is a return to the same urban landscape Lee explored two decades ago in "Do the Right Thing," with the director reprising the role he played in that film.

"It's very back to his roots, very much in his old style. He's even playing his old character, Mookie," Cooper said. "This is the same neighborhood."

Overseen by Robert Redford's Sundance Institute, the festival runs Jan. 19-29

in Park City, Utah.

Sundance opens with four films that were announced last week among the festival's dramatic and documentary competitions. It closes with one of the premieres unveiled Monday, directors Brian Klugman and Lee Sternthal's literary plagiarism story "The Words," starring Bradley Cooper, Jeremy Irons, Dennis Quaid and Olivia Wilde. The premieres, which

screen out of competition, also include actor-director Josh Radnor's campus romance "Liberal Arts," co-starring Elizabeth Olsen and Allison Janney; Timothy Greenfield-Sanders' aging supermodel documentary "About Face," featuring Christie Brinkley, Paulina Poriskova and Christy Turlington; Rory Kennedy's Ethel Kennedy portrait "Ethel"; and two musical documentaries — an as-yet-untitled Paul Simon documentary from director Joe Berlinger, and rapper Ice-T's "Something From Nothing: The Art of Rap," featuring Snoop Dogg, Dr. Dre, Eminem, Kanye West and other performers.

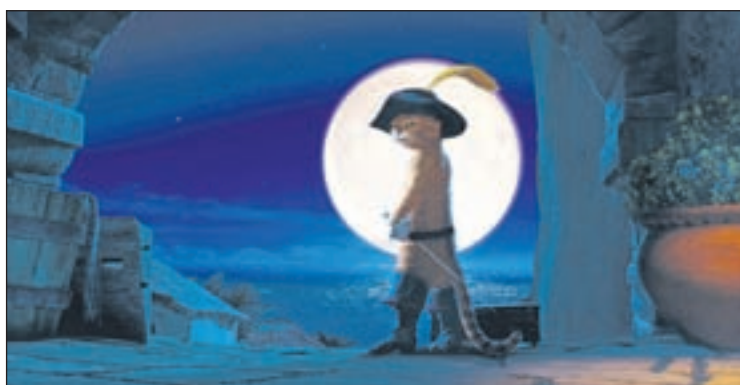
The premieres present strong roles for women, said Trevor Groth, the festival's programming director. Among them: Michael Walker's workplace tale "Price Check," starring Sundance regular Parker Posey; Lee Toland Krieger's divorce romance "Celeste and Jesse Forever," with Rashida Jones, who also co-wrote the film; and Frears' "Lay the Favorite," with Rebecca Hall in the lead alongside Willis and Zeta-Jones. □

'Rango,' 'Rio,' 'Puss,' 'Tintin' earn Annie noms

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Johnny Depp's "Rango," Anne Hathaway's "Rio," Antonio Banderas' "Puss in Boots" and Steven Spielberg's "The Adventures of Tintin" are among films competing for best-animated film at the Annie Awards.

The 10 nominees announced Monday also include James McAvoy's "Arthur Christmas," Owen Wilson's "Cars 2," Jack Black's "Kung Fu Panda 2" and three overseas contenders: "A Cat in Paris," "Arrugas" and "Chico & Rita."

Cast members earning voice-acting nominations for the Annie Awards in-



In this image released by Paramount Pictures, Puss in Boots, voiced by Antonio Banderas, is shown in a scene from "Puss in Boots."

Associated Press

clude "Arthur Christmas" co-stars Bill Nighy and Ashley Jensen, "Kung Fu Panda 2" co-stars Gary Oldman and James Hong and "Puss in Boots" co-star Zach

Galifianakis.

Presented by the International Animated Film Society, the Annie Awards will be handed out Feb. 4 at a ceremony in Los Angeles. □

Madonna to perform at halftime of Super Bowl



Director Madonna attends a special screening of "W.E." at the Museum of Modern Art on Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011 in New York.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Madonna will be taking the stage on U.S. football's biggest night, the Super Bowl. The National Football League and NBC announced Sunday night that the Grammy Award-

winning singer will highlight the Feb. 5 show, which is the most-watched musical event of the year. More than 162 million in the U.S. tuning in to see The Black Eyed Peas' performance with Slash and Usher last February.

Madonna, a Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee who has sold more than 300 million records, will join such acts as Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band, Prince, U2, Paul McCartney, The Who and the Rolling Stones to perform during recent Super Bowls. She will collaborate with a team from Cirque du Soleil, choreographer Jamie King, and artists from Moment Factory. The Super Bowl will be broadcast worldwide on NBC. □

E! News host Rancic announces mastectomy

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Six weeks after revealing she has breast cancer, E! News host Giuliana Rancic says she will have a double mastectomy.

The 37-year-old made the announcement Monday on NBC's "Today" show.

"It was not an easy decision but it was the best decision for me," she said.

She plans to have the surgery next week and said she hopes to be recovered by New Year's Eve, when she and husband Bill Rancic are planning to be in Times Square.

Rancic said she received an "overwhelming outpouring of love, prayers and support" after announcing her breast cancer diagnosis in October.

"I want to make sure to thank everyone and give them an update for being so kind and loving and supportive," she said Monday. E! expressed its support for Rancic in a statement



In this Sept. 12, 2011 file photo, TV personality Giuliana Rancic attends the Rachel Zoe Spring 2012 fashion show during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York.

Associated Press

Monday.

"Giuliana's strength continues to amaze us," the network said. "We admire her courage and are proud to stand by her side through every step on her path to full recovery." □

Ticketmaster customers to get small fee credits

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Concertgoers who purchased tickets through Ticketmaster are being notified that they'll soon receive credits for fees they were charged over the past decade.

Emails are being sent to customers who are entitled to the credits as part of a class-action lawsuit filed in 2003 that alleged the company overcharged them. A pair of men had sued in Los Angeles over fees they were charged for purchasing tickets to Wilco and Bruce Springsteen concerts.

A settlement, which received preliminary approval from a judge in October, will give customers a \$1.50 credit on up to 17 tickets they purchased between specific dates in 1999 and 2011 that they can use on future purchases. It will also credit purchasers who received tickets via UPS up to \$5 for up to 17 transactions. The settlement is scheduled to be finalized in May.

The credits are for an "Order Processing Fee" that Ticketmaster assessed on purchases.

The credits come with several restrictions: Customers can only use two credits at a time and cannot use them for events scheduled at venues owned by concert giant AEG Live. Customers who were charged the fees are receiving emails announcing the settlement and will receive messages after the settlement is finalized with details on how to redeem the credits. Matthew Cameron, a Massachusetts lawyer, is objecting to the settlement, claiming its credits are "virtually useless" and do not fully compensate customers.

He wrote in a statement to the judge handling the case that the credits have no cash value and are "plainly designed to directly profit defendants at the further expense of the class." □

Rosie O'Donnell engaged to girlfriend

CHICAGO (AP) — Rosie O'Donnell and her girlfriend, Michelle Rounds, are engaged.

O'Donnell's publicist and a spokesman for the Oprah Winfrey Network say the host of "The Rosie Show" told her studio audience about the engagement Monday during a commercial break. The Emmy Award-winning talk show host's new program debuted in September. She tapes in Winfrey's former Chicago studio.

Rounds is a 40-year-old headhunter for an information technology company. O'Donnell is a mother of four and was previously married. She and former partner Kelli Carpenter publicly wed in San Francisco in 2004, two weeks after the mayor authorized granting marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The licenses were later voided by the California Supreme Court. O'Donnell's publicist says a wedding date hasn't been set. □



In this April 11, 2011 file photo, television personality Rosie O'Donnell attends the New York Women in Communications' 2011 Matrix Awards in New York.

Associated Press

Carrie Underwood continues winning streak at ACAs

CHRIS TALBOTT
AP Entertainment Writer

Carrie Underwood's fans have come through for her again, giving her another win at The American Country Awards. Underwood, last year's top winner with six awards, won female single of the year for "Mama's Song" on Monday night in Las Vegas. As expected, the show's focus was squarely on country music's youth movement with 20-somethings taking in the early haul of Fender Telecaster trophies and performances slots. Chris Young was the show's early leader, earning breakthrough artist and single of the year for "Voices."

Co-host Kristin Chenoweth, brought in to keep returning host Trace Adkins in line, added zing to the show. The diminutive Broadway star entered the MGM Grand Garden Arena in boxing gloves, a fighter's robe and impossibly tall high heels,



Carrie Underwood and Marti Frederiksen accept awards for "Mama's Song" during the 59th Annual BMI Country Awards in Nashville on Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2011.

Associated Press

tossing jabs at her 6-foot-6 (2-meter) counterpart while running circles around him. She then challenged him to a singing contest. After she required him to sing "Oklahoma," she dropped the robe to reveal an artificially enhanced posterior and launched into Adkins' hit "Honky Tonk Badonka-

donk." Later, Adkins carried her on stage strapped to his chest in a baby carrier. Jason Aldean, the night's top nominee with Zac Brown Band at 8, won album of the year for "My Kinda Party" and Blake Shelton won video of the year for "Who Are You When I'm Not Looking." □

Gifts that say you care



NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF
© 2011 New York Times

Give Grandma a bit of credit! These holidays, would she rather receive a silly reindeer sweater or help a schoolchild acquire glasses to see the blackboard clearly for the first time?

Choosing the perfect holiday gift is one of life's greater challenges, modestly more difficult than earning a Ph.D. in astrophysics. So it is time for my annual gift guide.

For starters, the websites of the major humanitarian organizations offer alluring holiday gifts. Through the International Rescue Committee, \$30 buys a flock of chickens for a needy family. At CARE, \$29 gets a girl a school uniform. Through Heifer International, you can stock a fish pond for \$300. With Mercy Corps, \$69 can start a female entrepreneur in the sewing business.

Beyond those organizations, here are some lesser-known charities that may help put a grin on Grandma – and on someone else.

— Helen Keller International fights blindness and malnutrition around the world with simple and cost-effective programs. One of the best ways to improve children's health is to focus on micronutrients, like iodine, vitamin A and zinc – and in some cases to fortify foods with nutrients at a negligible cost. Helen Keller International, at hki.org, is a leader in that effort, and gets more bang for the buck than almost any group I can think of. And those glasses I mentioned for a schoolchild? That's a Helen Keller International program, ChildSight, which operates in the United States as well as in Indonesia and Vietnam. Schoolchildren are screened for vision problems, and those who need glasses get them. Providing glasses costs just \$25 per child – which is a much better value than a sweater that will sit in a drawer for eternity.

— Against Malaria has a simple model: \$5 will buy a bed net that protects several people from mosquitoes that carry malaria. All the money that is donated goes to buy nets, and Against Malaria, at againstmalaria.com, gets a No. 1 rating and a rave review from GiveWell, which rates charities.

In a malarial area in Cambodia many years ago, I met a grandmother who was looking after several small children after their mother died of malaria. The

family had one bed net, and every night the grandmother had to decide which children would sleep under it – and which one she would leave outside.

For the price of a stocking stuffer, you can spare a mother or grandmother that wrenching choice – and potentially save a life.

— Reading Is Fundamental is an American program that promotes literacy in high-poverty communities in the U.S. Its government financing has been slashed in the tight budget environment, so it needs support.

The group is a public-private partnership with 400,000 volunteers, bringing huge efficiencies. It provides new, free books to 4 million children across the U.S., and encourages the kids to read. Information is at rif.org.

— The Citizens Foundation was started by Pakistani businessmen concerned about their country, and it builds terrific schools for needy children there. We're seeing U.S.-Pakistani relations spiral downward, and billions of dollars in U.S. military aid to Pakistan haven't accomplished much. The best way I can see to moderate Pakistan and defeat extremists is to bolster secular education.

When I travel in Pakistan, I see radical madrasas built by Wahhabi Muslim fundamentalists from Saudi Arabia and other countries, offering free meals to entice students. Fundamentalists donate because they understand the power of education to change a country. And we don't even compete. Information is at citizensfoundation.org.

— GEMS is a New York-based organization supporting U.S. girls who have been trafficked, prostituted or otherwise sexually abused. It provides shelter and education for those rescued from pimps and provides some of the first nurturing many have received.

GEMS stands for Girls Educational and Mentoring Services. It was founded by Rachel Lloyd, herself a survivor of the streets who went on to earn degrees from Marymount Manhattan College and City College of New York and wrote a searing memoir, "Girls Like Us."

Prostitution of children should be a stain on the national conscience, and GEMS helps survivors while using peer counseling to prevent the trafficking in the first place. It is at gems-girls.org. And here's a special holiday message you can pass on to university students: tell them that I'm announcing my annual win-a-trip contest. In 2012, for the sixth time, I will take a student with me on a reporting trip to the developing world to try to shine a light on neglected issues. These trips have been life-changing for past winners. Information about how to apply is on my blog, nytimes.com/onthebackground, and thanks in advance to the Center for Global Development for again helping narrow the applicant pool down to finalists. □



Send in the clueless



PAUL KRUGMAN
© 2011 New York Times

There are two crucial things you need to understand about the current state of American politics. First, given the still dire economic situation, 2012 should be a year of Republican triumph. Second, the GOP may nonetheless snatch defeat from the jaws of victory – because Herman Cain was not an accident.

Think about what it takes to be a viable Republican candidate today. You have to denounce Big Government and high taxes without alienating the older voters who were the key to GOP victories last year – and who, even as they declare their hatred of government, will balk at any hint of cuts to Social Security and Medicare (death panels!). And you also have to denounce President Barack Obama, who enacted a Republican-designed health reform and killed Osama bin Laden, as a radical socialist who is undermining U.S. security.

So what kind of politician can meet these basic GOP requirements? There are only two ways to make the cut: to be totally cynical or to be totally clueless. Mitt Romney embodies the first option. He's not a stupid man; he knows perfectly well, to take a not incidental example, that the Obama health reform is identical in all important respects to the reform he himself introduced in Massachusetts – but that doesn't stop him from denouncing the Obama plan

as a vast government takeover that is nothing like what he did. He presumably knows how to read a budget, which means that he must know that defense spending has continue to rise under the current administration, but this doesn't stop him from pledging to reverse Obama's "massive defense cuts."

Romney's strategy, in short, is to pretend that he shares the ignorance and misconceptions of the Republican base. He isn't a stupid man – but he seems to play one on TV.

Unfortunately from his point of view, however, his acting skills leave something to be desired, and his insincerity shines through. So the base still hungers for someone who really, truly believes what every candidate for the party's nomination must pretend to believe. Yet as I said, the only way to actually believe the modern GOP catechism is to be completely clueless.

And that's why the Republican primary has taken the form it has, in which a candidate nobody likes and nobody trusts has faced a series of clueless challengers, each of whom has briefly soared before imploding under the pressure of his or her own cluelessness. Think in particular of Rick Perry, a conservative true believer who seemingly had everything it took to clinch the nomination – until he opened his mouth. So will Newt Gingrich suffer the same fate? Not necessarily. Many observers seem surprised that Gingrich's, well, colorful personal history isn't causing him more problems, but they shouldn't be. If hypocrisy is the tribute vice pays to virtue, conservatives often seem inclined to accept that tribute, voting for candidates who publicly espouse conservative moral principles whatever their personal behavior. Did I mention that David Vitter is still in the Senate?

And Gingrich has some advantages none of the previous chal-

lengers had. He is by no means the deep thinker he imagines himself to be, but he's a glib speaker, even when he has no idea what he's talking about. And my sense is that he's also very good at doublethink – that even when he knows what he's saying isn't true, he manages to believe it while he's saying it. So he may not implode like his predecessors.

The larger point, however, is that whoever finally gets the Republican nomination will be a deeply flawed candidate. And these flaws won't be an accident, the result of bad luck regarding who chose to make a run this time around; the fact that the party is committed to demonstrably false beliefs means that only fakers or the befuddled can get through the selection process.

Of course, given the terrible economic picture and the tendency of voters to blame whoever holds the White House for bad times, even a deeply flawed GOP nominee might very well win the presidency. But then what?

The Washington Post quotes an unnamed Republican adviser who compared what happened to Cain, when he suddenly found himself leading in the polls, to the proverbial tale of the dog who had better not catch that car he's chasing. "Something great and awful happened, the dog caught the car. And of course, dogs don't know how to drive cars. So he had no idea what to do with it." The same metaphor, it seems to me, might apply to the GOP pursuit of the White House next year. If the dog actually catches the car – the actual job of running the U.S. government – it will have no idea what to do, because the realities of government in the 21st century bear no resemblance to the mythology all ambitious Republican politicians must pretend to believe. And what will happen then? □

China scrambles for high-tech dominance

DAVID BARBOZA

JOHN MARKOFF

© 2011 New York Times

BEIJING – In an otherwise nondescript conference room, Wu Jianping stands before a giant wall of frosted glass. He toggles a switch and the glass becomes transparent, looking down on an imposing network operations center full of large computer displays. They show maps of China and the world, pinpointing China's IPv6 links, the next generation of the Internet. China already has almost twice the number of Internet users as in the United States, and Wu, a computer scientist and director of the Chinese Educational and Research Network, points out that his nation is moving more quickly than any other in the world to deploy the new protocol. IPv6 – Internet Protocol version 6 – offers advanced security and privacy options, but more important, many more IP addresses, whose supply on the present Internet (IPv4) is almost exhausted.

"China must move to IPv6," Wu said. "In the U.S., some people don't believe it's urgent, but we believe it's urgent."

If the future of the Internet is already in China, is the future of computing there as well?

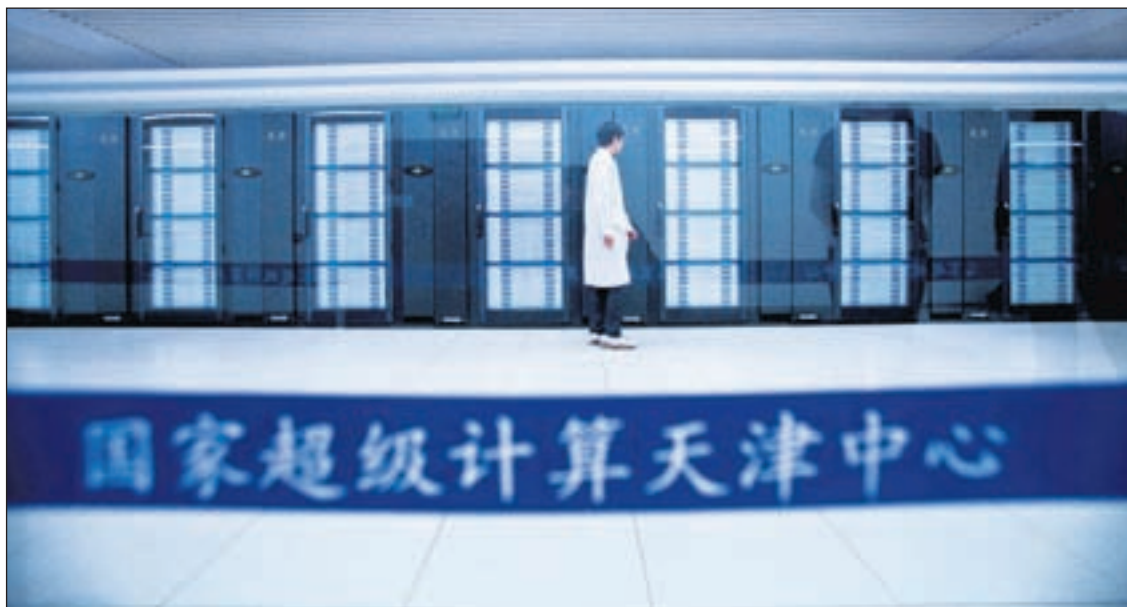
Many experts in the U.S. say it could very well be. Because of the ready availability of low-cost labor, China has already become the world's dominant maker of computers and consumer electronics products. Now, these experts say, its booming economy and growing technological infrastructure may thrust it to the forefront of the next generation of computing. For China, the quest to develop advanced computing centers is not simply a matter of national pride. It is an attempt to lay the groundwork for innovative Chinese companies and to reshape the technological landscape by doing something more than assembling the world's desktop PCs.

Never mind that there may



A lab worker with the Tianhe-1A supercomputer, which briefly became the world's fastest in late 2010, at the National Supercomputer Center in Tianjin, China. Some American experts say China's booming economy and growing technological infrastructure may thrust it to the forefront of the next generation of computing.

(Shiho Fukada/The New York Times)



A lab worker with the Tianhe-1A supercomputer. China already has almost twice the number of Internet users as in the United States, and Wu, a computer scientist and director of the Chinese Educational and Research Network, points out that his nation is moving more quickly than any other in the world to deploy the new protocol.

(Shiho Fukada/The New York Times)

be no Chinese Steve Jobs, said Clyde V. Prestowitz Jr., president of the Economic Strategy Institute.

"There are different kinds of innovation," he said. "We tend to equate innovation with companies that start from garages based on brainstorming. There is another kind of innovation that results in constant improvement that we are not good at – and they are."

The view is not universal. Still, other experts say it would be a mistake to underestimate China's capacity for rapid progress.

"When I went to China for

the first time in 1978, I saw workers stringing together computer memories with sewing needles," said Patrick J. McGovern, the founder of the International Data Group, an early investor in Tencent Holdings, one of the most successful Chinese Internet companies. "Now innovation is accelerating, and in the future, patents on smartphones and tablets will be originated by the Chinese people."

THE CHINA CHALLENGE

Going back six decades – to ENIAC, considered to be the first electronic computer – the U.S. has set both the

pace and the path of modern computing and communication. From mainframes to iPhones, from the ARPANET to WiFi, innovation has been as American as Norman Rockwell.

And for more than a generation, the hub of innovation has been Silicon Valley, a multicultural melting pot that has supported the singular amalgam of computer-hacker ethos and entrepreneurial aggressiveness that made it the envy of the world.

Probably the most serious challenge to the Valley's dominance came in the late 1980s from Japan,

which seemed on the brink of taking command of the semiconductor and computer industries until its economy foundered.

Today, China poses a very different kind of challenge. While Japan's economy has long been driven by exports, China will soon have the world's largest domestic market for both Internet commerce and computing.

The world took notice of Chinese technological prowess in late 2010, when a Chinese supercomputer, the Tianhe-1A, briefly became the world's fastest. Though it was made from U.S. processors and was soon surpassed by a Japanese machine, it was still indisputable evidence that the Chinese had achieved world-class computing designs. Then, this October, another Chinese supercomputer, the Sunway BlueLight MPP, broke the petaflop barrier – a quadrillion calculations per second – putting it among the world's 20 fastest computers. This machine proved even more surprising in the West. Not only was it based on a Chinese-made microprocessor, but it also achieved a significant advance in low-power operation. That might indicate the Chinese now have a significant lead in "performance per watt" – a measure of energy-efficient computing that will prove crucial to reaching the next generation of so-called exascale supercomputers, which are computers that will be a thousand times faster than the world's fastest today, and which are scheduled to arrive by the end of this decade.

"This is what Chinese companies need to do," said Hu Weiwu, a professor at the Chinese Academy of Sciences who is the chief designer of another Chinese family of microprocessor chips. "We can send a spaceship to space. We can design high-performance computers."

U.S. officials agree, saying the Chinese government's investment in supercomputing is paying off. □